BIBLE BIOGRAPHY

Introduction by

HENRY WARD BEECHER

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ILLUSTRATED

BIBLE BIOGRAPHY;

OR, THE

LIVES AND CHARACTERS OF THE PRINCIPAL PERSONAGES

RECORDED IN THE SACRED WRITINGS.

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION

BY REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER.

AND

AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

THIRTY DISSERTATIONS ON THE EVIDENCES OF DIVINE REVELATION.

BEING A COMPLETE SUMMARY OF BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE,

CAREFULLY CONDENSED AND COMPILED FROM

SCOTT, DODDRIDGE, GILL, PATRICK, ADAM CLARKE, POOL, LOWTH, HORNE, WALL, STOWE, ROBINSON, AND OTHER EMINENT WRITERS ON THE SCRIPTURES.

EMBELLISHED WITH TWENTY FULL PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS, BY GUSTAVE DORÉ,

THE GREATEST OF LIVING DESIGNERS,

AND A PRESENTATION PAGE BY THOMAS NAST,

THE CELEBRATED AMERICAN ARTIST.

IN ADDITION TO WHICH UPWARDS OF TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY ENGRAVINGS,

MANY OF THEM FROM CELEBRATED PAINTINGS IN THE PRINCIPAL EUROPEAN ART GALLERIES, BY SUCH EMINENT ARTISTS AS RAFFAELLE, M. ANGELO, MEYER, RUBENS, SALVATOR ROSA, WEST, LABORDE, LE SEUER, DE LA HIRE, ETC.,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF SCRIPTURE SCENES, MANNERS, CUSTOMS, &c.

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INTRODUCTION

BY REV.

HENRY WARD BEECHER

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INTRODUCTION.

BY REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER.

WE are living in one of those periods in which the human mind awakes to a review and reinvestigation of all its knowledge. Nothing is left undisturbed. The most venerable dogmas, principles which lie at the foundation of religious organization, the very elements of ethics, are unhesitatingly summoned before the bar of Reason, to make good their claims, as if they were adventurers, new come, instead of being, as they have been, and still are, the dictators of opinions and the censors of morals.

It would seem as if in this flood all foundations were to be swept away, and all churches and their creeds set aside, or convicted of being simple human devices. And, as men seldom discriminate between the religious element and the institutions by which religion is accustomed to operate, there is a prevalent fear that religion itself is to be destroyed.

In such a period it must needs be that the sacred Scriptures of the Jews and the Christian Scriptures should

undergo the severest scrutiny; that they should be assailed on historical grounds, both as to authenticity and authority; that their teachings should be rigorously tried by the results of modern philosophy; that their delineations of character, their statements of fact, and, especially, the statements of those remarkable occurrences called miracles, should be subjected to a minute, searching, and relentless trial before the bar of sceptical reason.

The Christian faith has often before been subjected to such seasons of trial, and those who know the results will be the least alarmed at new ordeals. These fiery trials have, hitherto, served only to purge away the dross, and to leave the gold purer and more precious. We may expect, in our own times, when the process is completed, and the sceptical period is past, and the world enters anew upon a *believing mood*, that the grounds of faith will be broader than ever before, that the spirit of religion will be purified from the lower elements of human passion which have colored its expositions, and that the power of the Invisible will control and educate the senses to a science nobler than any yet developed.

When that era shall come, we may be sure that the eminent figures so grandly carved in Scripture history will no longer be deemed, as too often they now are,—like the battered statues of old Egyptian ruins, that stand in grim solitude amid universal desolation,—memorials of old superstitions, spent and dead. On the contrary, these children of an elder age, of an imperfect civilization, who lived in extreme simplicity, and almost in a state of nature, will be found — like the features of the landscape amidst which they lived — to stand out with clear and simple lines, unwasted and unchanged by the mutations of ages.

Whatever may become of the various philosophies which have been drawn forth from the sacred Scriptures, there can be no doubt that its historical personages will stand in undiminished importance as long as the world endures. As men recede from the primitive ages, and civil society is framed anew upon methods unknown to early days, and utterly unlike the simplicity of Oriental and patriarchal society, these great names of antiquity will become even more attractive than ever before.

The personal histories of the Old Testament have all the charms of characters in a drama. This interest is heightened when we consider them as actors in the sublime drama of the world's development. They will never become trite. No one can tire of them. They will continue to charm both the earliest and the latest years of men's lives.

Adam, the dim, distant, first man! and Eve, his help-meet! — these are but cloudy names. How little is spoken of them, and how little did they speak! Yet the world is full of their story. If all that clusters around these shadowy creatures, in men's minds, were analyzed and traced to its origin, almost the whole would be found to have sprung from the imagination of painters and poets. Notably to John Milton we owe the English popular ideas of the character, history, and fall of this immortal primitive pair.

A few lines, artlessly spoken, paint the character of Cain and Abel. They stand far back in time, types of the two sorts of men that have dwelt together — men of physical force, and men of moral excellence. In the beginnings of time the passions ruled the world, and put the peaceful and the gentle under foot. When hundreds of years had rolled

away, it was declared, and again after other ages the declaration was renewed, that "The *meek* shall inherit the earth;" and every century is confirming the promise and prophecy. With the progress of Christian civilization the nobler faculties of the mind assert their authority, and men are beginning to perceive that nothing endures long which has not in it a pure moral element.

Enoch! But a single mention of this name is made in the Old Testament Scriptures. But that mention is one which sets loose the whole imagination — "And Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and he was not, for God took him." That he stood far above his contemporaries in the pure and noble elements of manhood, is plain enough, and that his death had in it something that was remarkable, is equally plain. But neither in regard to the one nor the other are there any details. Endless pages have been written of pure imaginative speculation, and at last we are no wiser. The name hangs upon the horizon like a star, radiant and beautiful, but whose contents and history no one can know.

Noah closes the first epoch of history — if the dim and brief notices of men before the flood can be called history. Until this grand disaster the history of the race is more like the inscriptions upon the stones of burial than living records of active men.

But now, that feeble stream of history, that, like some rill, hid itself in gorges, and only appeared here and there, at long intervals, begins to broaden, and deepen, and flow on with ever-increasing beauty and grandeur.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, — the trinity of patriarchal names, — what other three of antiquity have been held in such renown? Though dead, they yet speak. The nar

ratives which transmit to us the simple virtues of these primitive shepherd-rulers will never lose their charm. As long as childhood lasts they are supreme favorites. Nor when, in after years, the ripe scholar, having threaded the whole maze of libraries and learned the best things in every literature, returns to the witching simplicity of these charming biographies, will he find their flavor less than when they first delighted his childhood. Whatever changes may befall the philosophies of religion, it is certain that the world will never let these early scriptural narratives die.

We are not left wholly to our imagination for a picture of the manners and customs of these patriarchs. In form and appearance, in method of life and pursuits, they still live in the sheiks of the Arabian peninsula. The traveller in the Orient will still find in every encampment some venerable chief who might sit for a portrait of Abraham. An inventory of the household goods, and of the treasures of these modern wandering communities, would doubtless include every article known to antiquity. The world has stood still in the desert for thousands of years. No inventions have increased the utensils of the house or field. Husbandry is as rude as it was four thousand years ago. Fire-arms have been introduced; almost nothing else. It seems impossible to the mind of our whirling people, to whom change is luxury, and stability almost a yoke and burden, that any race of so much intelligence should remain for four thousand years as stationary as the features of the country in which they dwell.

Time would fail us were we to attempt to trace, even with lightest sketch, the wonderful history of that greatest name of antiquity — Moses. He was the true organizer

of the Jewish nation. To him it owes its civil and ecclesiastical systems: under his leadership the Jews, gradually overcoming the imbecility derived from long slavery, became warlike and victorious.

In succession came Joshua, Samuel, Saul, David — memorable names — warrior, priest, king, and poet-king. But no one can fail to notice, along the line of history to which these names belong, the periods occupied by *women* as judges and prophetesses. Nor can any one fail to linger and listen to that sweet idyl of Ruth — a strain of exquisite music pure from the human heart, sounding forth from the fields, and untouched by artificial influences. It is an exquisite symphony of Nature.

The Hebrews, of all Oriental nations, come nearest to the wisest modern nations in their estimate of the place and duties of WOMAN. While in Greece, and in almost all Oriental nations, woman was a secluded creature, neither the companion nor equal of man, in Palestine she was a noble helpmeet, moving freely in society, and permitted to learn whatever man learned. If she possessed the gifts requisite, and the occasion required, there were among the Jews neither customs nor prejudices which prevented women from assuming the offices of prophet, teacher, judge, or ruler. In the whole Bible there is no limitation put upon the sphere and functions of women, with the exception of two epistles, one written to a church filled with Greek converts, and another to the overseer of Greek churches. It is evident, therefore, that the restrictions enjoined in these cases were local and temporary. Converts to Christianity were not to violate rudely the social customs of the nations to which they belonged. If Greek communities would be shocked at the spectacle of a woman enacting any public

part, Christian converts should regard that feeling, and not, by rude aggression, incline heathen nations to believe that Christianity was a violent revolution.

In churches made up of Hebrew converts, among whom women were bred to greater liberty than among Greeks, no restriction whatever, in any epistle or part of Scripture, is put upon the exercise of their gifts either in public or in private.

With David the kingdom reached its highest point. Israel had become strong, well organized, and wisely governed. The reign of Solomon, like autumnal leaves, was more brilliant than that of his father, because farther on towards decay. Solomon was wise in the estimation of his own age. Measured by our age, he would be regarded as effeminate, foolish, and oppressive. At his death the kingdom went to pieces. Thereafter came discord, civil war, successive reigns of most corrupt men, with only an occasional ruler who sought in vain to stay the downward progress. Soon began a long succession of captivities and partial restorations. But never again, after Solomon, did the kingdom attain the power and influence which it reached under the wise rule of David — greatest of all the kings of Israel.

Then, at intervals, came forth the prophets — men of great natures and profound patriotism, seeking to bring back their countrymen from the gross superstitions of heathen worship, and the grosser immoralities into which they fell headlong! Where else shall we hear such high discourse, so true to nature, so full of deep religious feeling, so humane and rational, so wise in statesmanship, and, withal, so grand in its poetical spirit, and sublime in diction, as in Isaiah, in Jeremiah, in Ezekiel, in Hab-

akkuk, in Amos, Hosea, Joel, and the brotherhood of minor prophets?

Then comes a period of silence. It was like the hours in the morning which precede twilight. It was broken by the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

At length He came, for whom the Ages waited! The narrative of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ is framed in an exquisite simplicity. It is utterly without ornament. It is scarcely possible to conceive of histories so little indebted to the commonest helps of rhetoric. The portrait of Jesus is like a picture painted upon the air. The background is heaven; the only accessories, the pure atmosphere!

Enlarge it as you will, and rewrite it to the needs of modern philosophy or of material science, there will never be formed any other such effective portrait of our divine Master as is found in the Four Evangelists. In his spotless life; in his serene and noiseless philanthropy; in his teachings of a transcendent morality, which should exalt men above their animal conditions into a sphere of manhood in sympathy with the divine nature; in his profound spiritual doctrines, his insight into the world to come, — we have a memorial unequalled, and unapproached in any literature or in any history!

If his life be so wonderful, what shall we say of his sufferings and his death? They have transformed the human conception of sorrow. They have revolutionized our ideas of pain and trouble. A new era dawned with the morning which awoke the three days' sleep! Human life entered upon a new plane. And now, ere long, we begin to hear those strange joys, men singing in chains,

dying in ecstasy amid the pitiless storm of stones, rejoicing in afflictions, triumphant amid defeats, and out of weakness rearing up a power before which idols fell, laws changed, governments went down, and the whole civilization of the world was transformed!

The lives of the followers of Christ, like stars in the presence of the sun, are dim, and almost lost. The truth lived and grew in power. The men who proclaimed it sought no earthly immortality. Only one conspicuous exception is found. Paul, the latest gathered of the apostolic band, was eminently the chief of all. What Moses was to the Levitical dispensation, that was Paul to the Christian. His own writings are filled with his personal history. They are full of moral egotism. They are a splendid proof that in a noble nature, full of disinterested devotion to another, and free from selfish ambition, egotism becomes, if not a virtue, at least a pleasure to those who read, since it reveals the fulness of self-devotion, the almost annihilation of conscious personality in the supreme and heroic devotion of the soul of the follower to the cause and person of his divine Leader.

Every attempt to lead back our youth to these noble narratives of the Bible should be sedulously encouraged. Such histories will inspire in the soul a love of Nature. They are the histories of men who lived out of doors. They were in intimate sympathy with Nature. Not another book in all antiquity, not a single Greek or Roman classic, not one work in modern literature, can compare with the Hebrew Scriptures for a profound insight into the natural world, for a recognition of its sublime phenomena, and for such a constant use of its imagery as shows a tender love for the whole wonderful realm of God in Nature.

Science is, at length, drawing men back again to a devout study of those very elements which Hebrew prophets and priests, thousands of years ago, associated so intimately with the worship of God, that the whole earth became a divine temple to the devout Jew, and every phenomenon was a revelation of God.

I commend to parents who desire to inculcate the purest examples upon their Children, this series of Bible History, with the hope & prayer, that the leading of the may be accompanied by the blessing of their Father's God!

Henry Ward Beecher

PREFACE.

Biography possesses many important advantages over general history. The principal perhaps of these is the tendency which it has to improve the heart by portraying Virtue and Vice as they actually appear in the conduct of individuals.

When we contemplate the variegated scenes of public life, as exhibited on the theatre of the world, our minds may be filled with admiration, but they will often be perplexed with difficulties, and deceived by false appearances. The causes of the most important events are frequently buried in the depths of oblivion, or so confounded in the mazes of party prejudice and political intrigue, as not easily to be explored. Should we, indeed, after much inquiry and attention, obtain a very comprehensive knowledge of what has been transacted in the world since its origin, the acquisition, though undoubtedly very valuable, would not be of much practical utility in correcting our passions, regulating our conduct, strengthening our faith, animating our hopes, or cheering us in this checkered scene of vanity and trouble.

But when we are steadily engaged in considering one character, and have before us an exact and regular view of him in every age and circumstance of life, from infancy to manhood, and in all the various relations which, in the social state, he is called to fill, abundant matter is presented to us, which, if duly improved, will make us both wiser and better than we were before. We behold in men of like passions, and placed in similar situations with ourselves, the advantages which are the result of early piety, of virtuous resolution, of lowliness of mind, and of religious integrity. We may thus see the "beauty of holiness" as it were embodied, and exhibiting its graces in a variety of forms and under numerous circumstances, which in the bustle of public life would pass by lost and unheeded. The religious character is contemplated to advantage in prosperity and adversity, bearing the one with an humble and thankful heart, and the other with calmness and resignation. But religion is, probably, seen in its greatest lustre during the dark and dismal hour of death. In that solemn season, when the busy scenes of folly are shut out, when the noise and contentions of the world are no longer heard, when splendid rank and honors are disregarded, when pomp, and riches, and pleasures bear the glaring and mortifying inscription of VANITY and VEXATION — then does Religion look through the gloom, and as she smiles upon the dying Christian, kindles in the bosom even of the vain and irreligious beholder, a wish to die the death of the righteous, and to have his latter end like his.

In this grand point it is that the excellency of BIOGRAPHY is strikingly displayed, by introducing us not only to the acquaintance of the wise and good in their meditations, and in their labors of piety and love, but also to their dying beds, where we behold the triumph of faith over the fears of death, and see them breathing their souls with joyful hope into the hands of their HEAVENLY FATHER.

In the consideration of such scenes, and not in beholding the bustling events of the world, we learn the true estimate of human life, and the proper end of our being.

This naturally directs us to one of the most distinguished excellencies of the HOLY SCRIPTURES, as abounding with numerous examples of faith and holiness, delineated with the strictest impartiality, all of them powerfully calculated to awaken in us a concern about the best things, and to lead us in the path of righteousness. In a moral sense alone the SCRIPTURE CHARACTERS are the most proper that can be presented for our imitation, because they are represented as they truly were, without any design of extenuating their errors or exaggerating their virtues. No art is made use of to exhibit them to us to the best advantage, but they are shown in their native simplicity, in a great variety of natural situations, and exactly "as men of like passions with ourselves."

But there is a higher point of view in which the BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIONS OF THE BIBLE excel all others; and this indeed must be of the utmost importance. We mean the instruction which we learn from them in the things which concern our everlasting salvation. Morality may be serviceable to us in our connexion with one another as members of the same society; but it can neither open or maintain a communication with HEAVEN.

That Revelation which GOD has given to us in his Holy Word alone does this, and while we learn from it the faith which is necessary to salvation, we are presented with numerous instances of persons who have lived and died in the enjoyment of it. By considering their examples then, we not only see the beauty of virtue, and are charmed with the excellencies of an humble, contented, temperate, and pious life, but we gather from them information concerning the "things of the kingdom of GOD."

We see what animated them in their progress through a troublesome world, what enabled them to resist temptation, to overcome difficulties, to brave persecution, and to encounter even the terrors of death without dismay; not the energies of their own minds, not a philosophical indifference to pain and pleasure, but a comfortable belief of the "great mystery of godliness" which the MESSIAH undertook to accomplish for the salvation of a lost world. In the lives of these Worthies we see the great truths of our religion elucidated, not merely in the morality of their actions, but in the purity of their principles. We see them witnessing a good confession in the darkest times, bearing their testimony to the work of redemption, living by faith upon the SON OF GOD, and dying in the triumphant assurance of His salvation.

HE is the centre of the system round which all the luminaries of the Christian Church have moved, both before his incarnation and since his ascension, deriving their light solely from him, and kept in their course by the influence of His grace.

This important doctrine runs through the following pages, and we trust that our readers will not be displeased with us for endeavoring throughout the work to keep their attention constantly alive to this grand object. But though an evangelical turn has been given to every incident where it could naturally be admitted; yet we are not so fond of allegory as to admire the fancy of spiritualizing all objects, institutions, and circumstances mentioned in THE BIBLE. Where a

type was obvious, and the relation between natural and spiritual objects was evident, we have readily given ourselves a scope in the elucidation, and have tried to make our readers feel the same degree of pleasure with ourselves.

Yet we have studiously avoided all appearance of mysticism, and that obscure mode of expression which tends to excite curiosity without gratifying it, and which renders plain truths confused and perplexing, instead of being familiar and edifying.

The numerous HISTORICAL and LANDSCAPE ILLUSTRATIONS of the Sacred volume, introduced into this work, will meet, the editor trusts, with the approbation of all whose good opinion is to be appreciated. The mother who guards with fond anxiety the infant years of her children, seeks with an increasing eagerness for every clear medium through which the great events of Scripture may be impressed, and lastingly, on their tender minds. And the longer she contemplates, the more firm becomes her conviction, that the graphic art, if properly applied, is a powerful engine in working on the heart of man, to wean him from VICE, and win him to VIRTUE. The History of the Creation, Fall, Deluge, Dispersion of Mankind, Calling of Abraham, &c. &c., have been selected as the most useful, grateful, and noble objects for pictorial representation; and to this inexhaustible source of historic Scriptural subjects, are added the Ministry and Sufferings of the MESSIAH.

The experience of every parent convinces him how attractive these pictured forms of history are for the generation growing up under his eye: the experience of every individual recalls the interest with which his infancy pored over these spells of thought; the eagerness with which he sought the explanatory details of passages that otherwise might never have caught his attention; and the depth and clearness of the impression thus fixed indelibly on the memory. Stamped with mystic awe upon our infantine reverence, they still rise holiest in the heart, whatever its subsequent wanderings; still, through after-life, preserve in the bosom the better half of our religion—its earliest, purest, and untainted sense; and, amidst the sorrows and sadness of the world, come back upon us, bright in the innocence of former days—an oil upon the troubled waves, a note of music amidst tempest, breathing peace through all the devastation around us. It was to BIBLE PRINTS that the infant DODDRIDGE was indebted for the rudiments of that knowledge which is developed in his works. Speaking of his early religious impressions, JOB ORTON, in his life of this eminen divine, observes: "I have heard him (Dr. D.) relate that his mother taught him the history of the Old and New Testaments before he could read, by the assistance of some Dutch titles in the chimney of the room where they commonly sat; and her wise and pious reflections upon the stories they represented, were the means of making some good impressions upon his heart, which never wore out: and therefore this method of instruction he frequently recommended to parents."

There can be little doubt that the grateful satisfaction which this exemplary parent felt while thus discharging a mother's first and sweetest task, was heightened by the gladdening hopes which awakened interest excited, as, bending in enderest affections over the precious charge, she

> ——"answered all its questions, and asked others
> As simple as its own, yet wisely framed
> To wake and prove an infant's faculties;
> As though its mind were some sweet instrument,
> And she, with breath and touch, were finding out
> What stops or keys would yield the richest music"

In delineating the SCRIPTURE CHARACTERS, we had YOUNG PERSONS chiefly in our view, and have therefore endeavored to render the whole pleasing and instructive to them. The seeds of piety cannot be sown too early, and nothing will so much recommend religion as an agreeable form. HISTORY and BIOGRAPHY are very attractive to young minds, (especially when accompanied with correct and suitable engravings, illustrative of the facts and scenes recorded in the Sacred Volume,) and if we can recommend the essential principles of religion, by means of this species of composition, an important service will be rendered to the rising generation.

This method is also well calculated for family instruction on Sabbath evenings, as nothing will excite attention or produce reflection so much as an entertaining and interesting narrative. Most of the articles in this volume are of such length as to be easily read through in one sitting; a few only are considerably longer, and these may be divided into two or three portions, as shall appear most convenient.

May HE from "whom cometh every good and perfect gift," give HIS blessing to this work, the design of which is to promote the knowledge of HIS HOLY WORD, in this age of infidelity and licentiousness!

TO HIM, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, Three Persons in one undivided essence, be all honor and glory. AMEN!

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ADAM

DIED IN THE YEAR OF THE WORLD, 931; BEFORE CHRIST, 3073.

IF it be pleasing to review the lives and actions of those persons from whom we derive our immediate descent, and who have done honor to their family name by their talents and their virtues, it must certainly be interesting to all of us, as the common descendants of Adam, to be acquainted with the particulars of his life. No history of the world pretends to give an account of the first parents of the human race but that of Moses; although it is clearly evident, from the very nature of things, that however numerous the present inhabitants of the globe may be, there must have been a time when one pair alone existed thereon. The animal world as well as the inanimate must necessarily have had a beginning. To talk of the eternity of matter is to give it qualities which we see it does not possess, and to suppose a never ending series of men is downright folly. All civilized nations agree in the fact that the world had a beginning, though their accounts of its creation differ in the extreme. The mythologists have given descriptions of the creation, and the philosophers have fabricated theories upon the subject, all of which only serve to perplex the inquiring mind, and to render it dissatisfied, because they are not supported by anything like rational evidence. The account of this important event, which is recorded in the book of Genesis, possesses all the strong marks of sober truth, and accords exactly with the principles of sound philosophy. The language also employed to describe the process of the Creation is admirably suited to the magnitude and gravity of the subject, and carries with it an insuperable evidence of divine authority.

GOD, the self-existent and beneficent Author of all things, is introduced as simply expressing his will, and behold every part of nature takes its regular form and assumes its proper province. All things are here done in perfect order and in an exact method, showing us that evil only is discordant and irregular, and that a good end must always be attained by consistent means. The OMNIPOTENT began with calling *Light* into existence as indispensably necessary to the stupendous and glorious scene which was about to take place. GOD himself is called "Light, and in him is no darkness at all." John i. 5. Light is social, cheering, and lovely. Without it we could pursue no pleasing object, or enjoy any rational delight. And if our minds are not enlightened with a knowledge of GOD, as he is revealed in the Scriptures of truth, all our works will be done in disorder, and all our pursuits will be evil. There can be no fitness, regularity, or utility in what we do, unless we walk by this Light, and conform ourselves to its unerring directions. "Thy Word," says the Psalmist, "is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my paths." Psalm cxix. 105. Those persons who take this Word for their guide will walk uprightly in this evil world; whereas they who follow any other rule, will be liable to numerous mistakes, and will fall into many corruptions, because they do not know or do not abide by the truth of GOD.

The want of conformity to this director was, as we shall soon see, the cause of all the evil and misery which have covered the earth from the beginning of the world to this day. In the following narratives we shall often have occasion to observe how very happy it has been for men to adhere to this Word, and how wretched even many good men have made themselves by only occasionally deviating from it. The Word of GOD is that pure light which leads us to the realms of immortal happiness with safety, steadiness, and honor; whereas the way of man, when he trusts to his own imagination, is the path of error, danger, and shame.

When the adorable Parent of all had fitted up this stupendous globe with everything in it that was pleasant to the eye and good for food, he formed man out of the dust of the ground to rule over and enjoy it. How gracious was this conduct of the ALMIGHTY in first creating everything necessary for the convenience and comfort of man, and then leaving him nothing to do but to enjoy and cultivate the gift, and to adore his BENEFACTOR!

Man was formed out of the dust of the ground, and was in consequence called ADAM, which signifies *red-earth*, that from a sense of the lowness of his original he might always be humble. All human beauty is but modified clay, brittle and perishable. How little, then, have the sons and daughters of men to be proud of, when it is considered that dust they are, and unto dust they must all return!

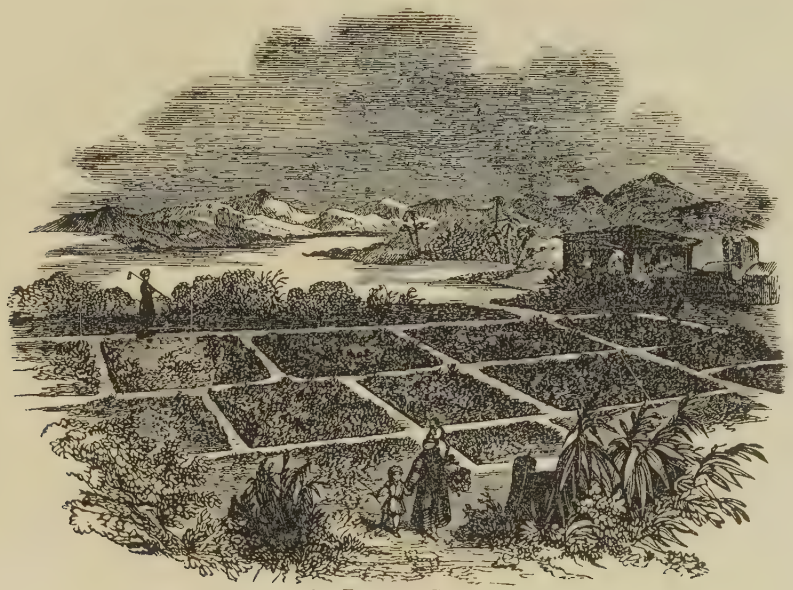
But though the materials out of which Adam was formed were in themselves exceedingly mean and contemptible, yet we are told "he was created in the image of GOD, and after his likeness." Gen. i. 26.

It would be a great error to suppose that this similitude consisted in the external form or figure of man; for GOD is a Spirit, and Man is material. The eternal BEING is without body, parts, or passions, and therefore it is impossible that HE should be like any created object. This "likeness," then, must necessarily have been of a spiritual nature. Adam had this distinction from all the other inhabitants of the globe, in possessing an immortal, rational spirit, which was infused into him by the immediate operation of his Creator. While he continued in obedience and innocence, he was, as to the powers of his mind, and the disposition of his soul, in conformity to GOD, and possessed of a divine likeness. What a noble being then was Man, pure and exalted, righteous and god-like, living in obedience to the divine will, and in habits of close and immediate friendship with the great JEHOVAH!

Though the whole earth was beautiful and fertile, yet to manifest his goodness to man, and to evince his right over him, "GOD planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put man, whom he had formed, that he should dress and keep it." Idleness was not allowed even in Paradise, filled as it was with all things pleasant to the sight and good for food. Adam, though he could know no want, nor be apprehensive of any scarcity, had yet an employment assigned him, that he might keep his faculties in exercise, and manage his time and opportunities to the best advantage. Industry and righteousness are constantly united, and no man can be said to love or serve GOD who does not endeavor to do good in his generation. Useful employment, conducted with a devout temper of mind, will always produce pleasure, even though it be laborious. While Adam continued in obedience, his occupation in the garden was not burdensome but delightful. After he lost his innocence, the same employment was oppressive and grievous, because it was imbittered by the sense of guilt.

In order that he might avoid presumption, and always preserve a sense of duty in his mind, a restraint was laid upon him in one instance, and in one only. The whole range of creation was freely allowed him for his use and enjoyment, but one, comparatively trifling, object was excepted. "And the LORD GOD commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. ii. 16, 17.

It was certainly proper that Adam should have some test to prove his obedience, and to keep him mindful that he held his extensive and valuable domain only as a tenant. He was, therefore, bound by a covenant not to violate one object, under no less a penalty than banishment from Paradise, the loss of the divine life or favor, and the certainty of suffering pain and death. But though he was thus restricted from touching the tree of knowledge, the fruit of another, peculiarly valuable, was expressly granted him: this was the tree of life, which grew in the midst of the garden, and the fruit of which appears to have possessed extraordinary qualities, being probably of an



An Eastern Garden.

mmortalizing nature. The one was opposite to the other, the ALMIGHTY having placed efore man death and life, happiness and misery, good and evil. for his free choice without any compulsion of his will.

So bountiful was Providence to Adam, and so slight was the condition upon which he held the lordship of the world and the possession of paradise. But even this spot was not completely happy without suitable society. God, indeed, was the friend of man, and held familiar intercourse with him. The blessed angels also frequently visited their younger brother, with a view of instructing him in many important subjects, and enlightening his mind with valuable knowledge. But with all his innocence and wisdom, one object was wanting to perfect his felicity. The several creatures around him, to whom he gave names according to their qualities, were properly paired, but Adam, the lord of all, was alone. The benevolent and all-wise Creator acknowledged that this state was not good for man. In solitude we may enjoy GOD, but it is in society only that we can properly serve him. The ALMIGHTY, attending to the exigency of the case, caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and as he slept, he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib which the Lord GOD had taken from man made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." Gen. ii. 23.

Marriage is the first institution we read of, and it was then established by the ALMIGHTY that man shall have but one wife, and that the union shall be indissoluble except by death: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh."

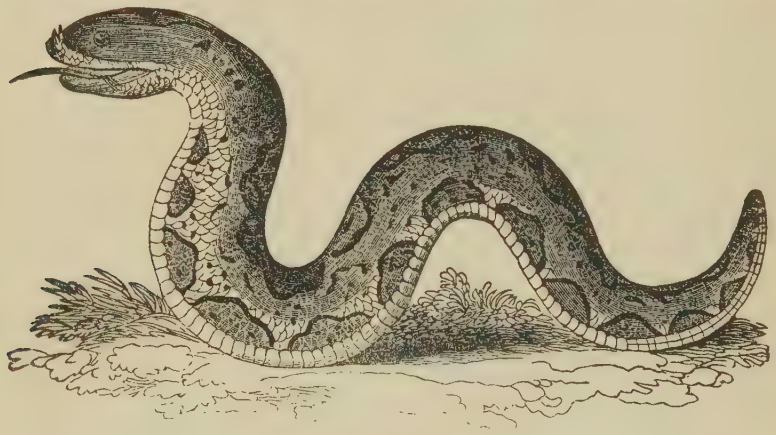
Adam has now a partner of his own kind, with whom he can freely converse upon the beauties of nature and the bounty of providence. He can communicate to her some of the knowledge with which GOD has endued him. He can explain to her many of those things which appear to her the most wonderful. He can describe the properties of plants and animals, and point out the uses which may be made of them. Above all, Adam can elevate the mind of his Eve to the Father of nature, and speak of his wonderful power, goodness, and condescension. He can worship with her, morning and evening, at the throne of grace, and offer up the sacrifices of thanksgiving to the God of love, from hearts unconscious of any evil. But it is his province also to instruct Eve in the duty which she owes to her Maker, and to point out to her the

fatal tree in the midst of the garden, the fruit of which contains the unknown malady of death. He informs her of the strict prohibition which has been laid upon them in this instance, and doubtless he warns her with affectionate earnestness against meddling with the produce of the baneful tree. But his caution is unavailing. The happiness of our first parents was of very short duration. The state of innocence and joy lasted but a little while; and that which has been emphatically called the golden age was confined, in all probability, within the narrow limits of a few days.

All was harmony, and beauty, and innocence throughout the creation while man retained his integrity. On his obedience depended the happiness of the whole world. He stood the representative of the human race, and, in some respects, that of all animated nature, and even of the globe itself. Death was to be the consequence of his transgression, not only to himself and his posterity, but also to the whole animated world

The manner in which this dreadful evil was first introduced deserves serious consideration. Various opinions and hypotheses have been formed on the subject of the *origin of moral and natural evil*, but what can be plainer than the account given of it in the Bible? Evil exists, and here we are informed how it originally happened, not by the order and direction of GOD, but through the fault of man.

The sacred history relates, that the woman was deceived by the serpent to eat of



VIPER (*El effah*).

the forbidden fruit, under a pretence that, so far from producing any calamity to her, it would, in fact, elevate her to a degree of divinity. It seems evident that this interview took place when Adam was at a distance from his wife; and there can be no doubt but that the serpent was an instrument made use of by the devil, for the purpose of deceiving the mother of mankind. That malignant spirit is called in Scripture the "old serpent," in allusion to the part which he assumed in this awful transaction; and he is moreover styled the "father of lies," because he accomplished his purpose by artful falsehoods and base misrepresentations. Having fallen from heaven by his pride and ambition, he cannot bear to see any other creature enjoying the divine favor: and therefore he determines upon destroying the happiness of our first parents, by depriving them of their innocence. He cunningly avoids attacking directly the integrity of Adam, but begins with the "weaker vessel," whose curiosity he inflames, by addressing her in a human voice from the mouth of a serpent. Some have supposed, and upon probable grounds, that the tempter was infolded in the branches of the tree itself, and that the sight having attracted the notice of Eve, he thence had a good opportunity of conversing with her upon the subject. His question to her was well adapted to discover the strength and disposition of her mind: "Yea, hath GOD said, Ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden?" Gen. iii. 1. Instead of being startled at this insinuating inquiry, or of repairing to her husband for direction, Eve enters at once into the deceiver's views, and gives him encouragement by the manner of her

answer. "And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, GOD hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, LEST ye die." Here was a plain equivocation, which expressed at once that doubt had begun to prepare her mind for infidelity. God had positively declared that death should be the consequence of disobedience, but she qualifies the threat as if it was a thing uncertain, *lest ye die.* The serpent, like a skilful manager, finding her mind so well prepared for his purpose, roundly avers, "Ye shall not surely die." A declaration so impudent, in opposition to that of GOD, ought to have alarmed the mind of Eve; but an unlawful desire, if not checked in the beginning, soon destroys the sense of duty and the dread of punishment. The serpent proceeds to excite her wish into action by a declaration well suited to operate upon her ambitious mind. "For GOD doth know," saith he, "that in the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." This artful suggestion prevailed, and the woman, having involved herself in guilt, soon drew her husband into the same transgression. Then, indeed, they found the words of the serpent true enough, in one sense, though not in that which he pretended, for their eyes were opened to a sense of shame, and having lost their innocence, they imagined their nakedness was a crime. They had also a "knowledge of good and evil," at least so far as to make them conscious of having contracted the one by not holding fast their integrity. They have now recourse to the broad leaves of the fig-tree for decent covering, a vain expedient to hide their guilt from the scrutinizing eye of that BEING who discerns the first motions of the heart, and traces them through all their minute progress into action. The voice and presence of the ALMIGHTY, which were wont to afford the greatest delight to Adam, now excite in him the most fearful apprehensions. He no longer courts an interview with his Maker, but dreads his approach, and, on hearing his voice in the garden, he hides himself in a thicket. But the criminals cannot escape the search of omniscience. The GOD of love now appears in judgment, and in the most awful manner he inquires, "Adam, where art thou?" Trembling and fearful, he answers with simplicity, "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself." This was a complete acknowledgment of his transgression, for why should he be afraid of the divine presence, if he had not violated the divine injunction? The all-searching Judge replies, "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" In this trial, how condescending, tender, and benevolent is the ALMIGHTY! Instead of appearing in thunder and lightning, he speaks to the culprits in the most gentle and expostulatory manner, drawing from their own lips a full confession of their guilt. Adam, in a spirit of cowardice, throws the blame upon his wife, and even casts a reflection upon his Creator for bestowing such a gift upon him. "The woman that THOU gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." *The woman that* THOU *gavest me.* And why was she given to him? Was it not for his comfort and advantage? Was it not that he should, by training her mind to a sense of religious duty, have in her a help-meet for him? His superior information and understanding deprive him of all excuse, and

FIG LEAVES (*Ficus Carica*).

ADAM AND EVE DRIVEN OUT OF PARADISE.

Page 17.

therefore the meanness of his plea only serves to aggravate his offence. Eve in her confession simply tells the truth, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." The inquiry being thus ended, judgment is passed, and it begins with the serpent, who is "cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field;" a sentence which has taken place in the most literal manner, as there is no creature in the world more generally dreaded and detested. But the ALMIGHTY proceeds to pronounce a judgment upon the secret cause of all this mischief in these words: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: IT (or rather HE) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." In this declaration is conveyed, in obscure terms, the promise of the MESSIAH, who, as the seed of the woman, should crush the head of the old serpent, or destroy his usurped dominion over the souls of men, and bring in eternal redemption for them.

And unto the woman, GOD said, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." This sentence was fulfilled, not only with regard to Eve, but it has been transmitted to all her daughters, reminding us of that misery into which she fell by her curiosity and presumption. The man was doomed to earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow, the ground itself being cursed for his sake. All nature partakes of his calamity. The elements are changed; the earth now brings forth thorns, and thistles, and noxious weeds; and the animal tribes no longer preserve their sense of obedience to man. The strong and the fierce proclaim, as it were, universal war against him; and the weak and timorous flee from his presence as from their greatest enemy.

THORN (*Ononis spinosa*).

Paradise must no longer be polluted by creatures who have defiled themselves with corruption. Having broken the covenant by which they held that delightful place, they must continue there no longer.

How exceedingly affecting is it to view, in imagination, Adam and his partner slowly measuring their steps from Eden, the seat of bliss, and once the seat of innocence, to go they know not whither, carrying in their bosoms painful remorse and guilty fear! But the decree is past. The ministers of divine justice are exact in fulfilling their commission; and the flaming sword of the cherubim forbids all access to the tree of life. Yet in the midst of judgment GOD remembers mercy. In the plenitude of his goodness he takes pity upon the wretched offenders, and clothes them with skins of animals, such probably as had been offered in sacrifice. This institution of sacrifices could never have been of human invention; for how strange is the thought, that the slaying a victim on an altar should expiate guilt, and satisfy divine justice! Hereby did the ALMIGHTY point man, by an expressive sign, to the great sacrifice and offering, which, in the person of the MESSIAH, was to be made for the sins of the world.

Thus mercy springs up at the same time with judgment, and hope arises in the midst of darkness. Though Adam and Eve depart out of Paradise in consequence of their transgression, yet the presence of GOD goes with them, and a sweet promise of regaining his favor consoles them in the midst of their suffering. How good and gracious is the LORD to his rebellious creatures, who have so heinously provoked his anger and challenged his justice! That anger is mingled with commiseration, and that justice readily unites itself with mercy for the redemption of man.

Adam, exiled from Paradise, labors for the food which is necessary to his support, and Eve in sorrow and pain conceives children. But though her suffering may be

great, her mourning gives way to a new species of delight, because she hath brought a man-child into the world. In the fulness of her joy she calls her first born *Cain*, which signifies *possessor*. Remembering the promise which had been given, that "her seed should bruise the serpent's head," she entertains the fond idea that the declaration will be realized in this child. Looking upon his infant features with delight as the promised deliverer, and taking a view of the delightful scene from which she had been forced to depart, she regains in imagination the beloved spot, and, therefore, gives the child a name expressive of her feelings. Adam doubtless shared with her in these rapturous sensations, and contemplated the infant with paternal pride and religious hope. But how deceiving are our expectations, even those of the purest kind, and how frequently are our desires crossed, though they may not be excited by any improper motives! Man in his fallen state is weak, precipitate, and ignorant. He builds up in his imagination many lofty structures and pleasing schemes, which can never be realized; and oftentimes the most virtuous and pious minds experience disappointment in the expectations which they have formed.

The hopes of Eve soon proved illusory, and, therefore, when she brought forth her next son, she gave him the appellation of Abel, which signifies *vanity*.

As these sons grew up to maturity, a strong diversity appeared in their tempers. The eldest was morose, selfish, and envious; the younger was gentle, yielding, and pious. Adam was careful to instil into their minds sentiments of religion, and taught them, by his example, the exercise of devotion. The mind of Cain was rude and unthankful; while the soul of Abel glowed with devotional ardor. He who sees the inmost movements of the heart was pleased with the sentimental religion of the younger brother, and gave a visible sign of his approbation by accepting his sacrifice. The offering of Cain, being merely a formal service, in which the heart of the worshipper was not concerned, was rejected. This inflamed the passions of the wretch into diabolical hatred, and, instigated by the evil one, he imbrued his hands in his brother's blood. Thus death obtained his first conquest over man, and in what a shocking manner! A more distressing spectacle cannot be conceived than the view of Adam and Eve contemplating with agonized hearts the mangled corpse of their pious and affectionate child. Death inflicted by the barbarous hands of their eldest son upon his unoffending brother, how dreadful! So little were they acquainted with mortality, that this horrible appearance of it probably appalled their souls with the dreadful fear of its one day happening in like manner to themselves. This idea, which was not unnatural in that early stage of the world, must have given an exquisite keenness to their grief, and have opened new sources of remorse and contrition for their disobedience.

But time mellowed down their sorrow, and Eve again brought forth a son, whom she called Seth, "for GOD," said she, "hath appointed me another seed in the room of Abel, whom Cain slew." Gen. iv. 25. From this language it appears that her faith in the promise which had sweetened the sentence of Heaven against her, was now revived, and that she regarded Seth as the deliverer appointed by the ALMIGHTY to regain Paradise.

The human race now multiplied to a great degree, for to effect this the age of man was protracted by Providence to a very long period. But the longest portion of time is comparatively short, and though in prospect it may carry a great and pleasing appearance, filled with scenes of importance and delight, it is yet momentary, and soon comes to a close. When we read of the long lives of the patriarchs before the flood, extended to a number of years little short of a thousand, we view the round number with astonishment, but what is the conclusion at last?—*They died.* Thus the same event happened unto them which must happen unto us. The sentence pronounced against Adam for his transgression was at length accomplished. After seeing the earth filled with his offspring, he bends downward to the earth whence he was extracted, and at the extraordinary age of nine hundred and thirty years, he yields up his spirit into the hands of GOD who gave it, and his body returns unto its primitive dust. This is the end of man. The sin of Adam brought death into the world, and who can expect to be exempted from the fatal stroke? Being partakers of his corruption, we are also sharers of his punishment.

But this death extends much further than to the extinction of animal life. It comprehends also the loss of the divine favor, and an absolute separation from that BEING who is the fountain of life and happiness. In this deplorable state both Adam and all

his posterity must have continued for ever, had not the ALMIGHTY, in pure benignity provided a remedy.

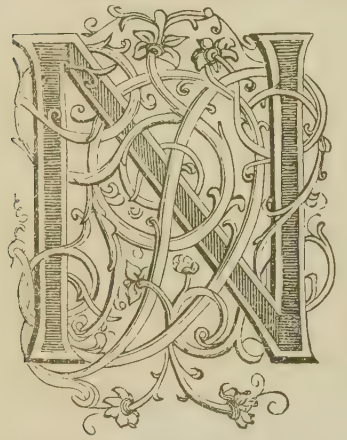
It is, therefore, delightful for us to turn from the affecting and melancholy history we have been reviewing, to contemplate the second Adam, and the work of redemption wrought out by him.

The "first Adam was of the earth, earthy; but the second Adam is the LORD from heaven." 1 Cor. xv. 47. This is no other than JESUS CHRIST, the promised deliverer, who was born of a woman, that he might in the human nature pay a full obedience to the divine commandments, and endure the punishment exacted by divine justice for man's transgression. He lived a holy and an unspotted life, that he might fulfil all righteousness for those who should believe in him, and he suffered at last an ignominious death, that he might open unto them the gates of everlasting life. He is the LAMB slain from the foundation of the world, being typified in the sacrifices of old, believed in by the ancient patriarchs, and described by the inspired prophets. He hath not indeed regained for us the terrestrial Eden and the tree of life, which constituted the principal glory of that happy spot; but he hath procured for us a right "to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Rev. ii. 7.

As by Adam came death, so by CHRIST came life and immortality. The curse of a violated law is removed from those who seek the favor of GOD by genuine repentance, and by a lively faith in the merits of the Mediator, who descended from his throne of glory for this express purpose, that he might "redeem unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Tit. ii. 14. So great was the divine goodness, that, before the offence was committed, this stupendous means of salvation was devised and established. The promise of the Savior was in consequence delivered to the offenders before their expulsion from Paradise, and it continued to be enforced and explained in clearer and stronger terms, "at sundry times, and in divers manners, by the prophets," till the illustrious personage himself appeared, who, after putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself, ascended up into glory, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us.

CAIN AND ABEL.

ABEL WAS MURDERED IN THE YEAR OF THE WORLD, 130: BEFORE CHRIST, 3874: BUT THE DEATH OF CAIN IS UNCERTAIN.



O truth is more evident than that Man is born to trouble, for we find that disappointment and domestic trials soon clouded the first family of the world. Sin produced calamity in abundance, and one rash act imbittered the remaining years of our first parents. Intervals of delight and seasons of hope did, indeed, cheer their hearts, and the divine promise which had been made to them of a deliverer, consoled them under the heavy loss which they had sustained. The first-born of Eve was beheld with rapture as the promised seed, and the fondest expectations were entertained of blessings to be derived from his virtues and his exertions. But as he grew upward his temper discovered a malignancy and stubborn ferocity, which convinced his parents that their hopes were delusive. In process of time Eve was delivered of another son, on whom she bestowed the name of Abel, the meaning of which is a *breath of air*, as the fittest emblem of *vanity*. Was she now become indifferent to the divine promise, or, by a kind of prophetic intuition, was she led to give him this appellation? Parents in general are fond of bestowing names which are pleasing and flattering to their hopes. But, in the present instance, there is an evident appearance of disappointment or fear. Thus in "sorrow did Eve" bring forth children.

From what the apostle John observes concerning the eldest of these brothers, that "Cain was of the wicked one," (John iii. 12,) and, indeed, from the whole tenor of his conduct, there can be no doubt but that he was from childhood under the influence of those wicked passions which are the principal instruments of the tempter.

His occupation was that of husbandry, at once laborious and unsocial. The earth, being now cursed for man's sake, no longer yielded him food spontaneously, but required much digging and dressing. This could not be done without suitable implements, and those in a rude age were necessarily of a very simple construction. The contrivance and formation of these lay, partly at least, upon Cain, and as the use of iron and other metals was then unknown, we may well suppose that with tools made of wood, agriculture could not be a very easy employment. What must have deeply affected the gloomy mind of Cain still more, was the reflection that this weight of labor which he endured was the consequence of his parents' transgression. He had often learned from their own lips what they had lost, and he had heard them describe the ease and delight of their former state in contrast with their present condition.

He therefore probably thought it hard to bear any part of their burden, and without having had any share in their offence, to undergo a principal part of the sentence, "to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow." Discontent is always allied to envy and hatred. Cain's younger brother had a disposition and an employment very different from his. He was of a meek and religious turn, to which his pastoral occupation greatly contributed. Beloved of God, it is no wonder that he should be the delight of his parents also. This could not be pleasing to the selfish heart of his brother, who bore his own lot with dissatisfaction, as being a kind of punishment, and viewed that of Abel as the effect of unjust partiality.

Adam, it seems, carefully endeavored to instil into the minds of his children sentiments of religious duty, and taught them by his example to adore their Creator as the author of all their gifts. Cain was not so lost to decency as to neglect entirely the worship of GOD. When the earth, which he had cultivated with so much pains, brought forth fruit in profuse abundance, he erected an altar, and made thereon an offering unto the Lord. At the same time his brother Abel brought an offering of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fattest thereof, as a sacrifice of atonement. "And the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering; but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect." Gen. iv. 4. The reason of this difference is thus accounted for by the apostle Paul: "By *faith* Abel offered unto GOD a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, GOD testifying of his gifts." Heb xi. 4. He came before GOD with a heart filled with love to him, and fully resting upon his grace and goodness. "He that cometh to GOD must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. v. 9. Abel not only believed in the existence and power of GOD, but in his holiness, his justice, and his mercy. This made Abel humble in his own eyes, conscious of being, as a sinner, unworthy to approach the divine presence. He made his offering, therefore, with a penitent heart, supplicating pardon and acceptance from the ALMIGHTY. His motives were discerned by the Searcher of hearts, and the heavenly flame descending upon the altar consumed his victim, as a manifest token that the worshipper was accounted "righteous before the LORD."

GREEK WORSHIPPING WITH THE HEAD UNCOVERED

The offering of Cain remained where he had placed it; because it was not accompanied by the heart of the giver. He came merely because it was customary to come, and he laid the fruits of the earth upon the altar, as if he had been bestowing a favor rather than courting one. No sense of religious or social duty actuated his mind. He had no idea of being a sinner, nor any awful apprehension of the divine justice as exercising itself against sin. At the very time when he "built an altar unto the LORD," his heart was a prey to discontent, envy, and hatred: the polluted offering, therefore, instead of obtaining any mark of divine favor, was rejected with abhorrence as a vile profanation. He saw his brother's victim flaming at a distance, and the grateful cloud ascending from the altar toward heaven, while his own labored pile, and all that he had laid upon it, were cast off as a proof of the divine displeasure. This, so far from humbling his mind, and bringing him to repentance, filled him with bitterness and excited him to rage. Instead of justifying the righteous and holy GOD, by calling his sin to remembrance, and examining his heart and conduct, he became furious and vengeful. "His countenance fell, and he was very wroth." Gen. iv. 5. Wretched mortal, he had the temerity even to be angry with Heaven, and to entertain a resentful enmity against Providence!

The LORD, full of goodness and condescension, reasons with Cain upon his evil conduct; and in the most gentle, persuasive manner endeavors to soften his obdurate heart. "Why art thou wroth?" says he; "and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well sin lieth at thy door;' that is, it remaineth as thy own fault to condemn thee. Nothing can possibly be more equitable than this reasoning. A fair choice is set before Cain, and it lies with him to follow either right or wrong. The ALMIGHTY has laid no man under a necessity of sinning; nor will he condemn any one for involuntary errors. But if, after a fair warning, and after obtaining a knowledge of his duty, man will disobey the LORD by violating his laws, he can have no ground to complain if GOD shall reject and punish him. The ways of the ALMIGHTY are all perfectly right, and such as every man's unbiased judgment must approve: conscience gives them her entire sanction whenever her still sober voice is attended to, and attended to it must either be now to a genuine repentance, or hereafter to goad us with remorse and anguish. The ALMIGHTY, in order to remove all excuse from Cain, and to give him every opportunity of doing good instead of evil, graciously gives him a promise, that upon his making a right choice he shall hold the pre-eminence over his brother. This right of primogenitureship was considered as invaluable in the early ages, and included a degree of sovereignty. What can Cain desire more? The GOD of heaven has deigned to open to him the path of duty, to reason with him upon his doubts, to make him a promise of his favor upon the fairest conditions, and to superadd another promise calculated to calm down his disturbed passions, and to disperse his gloomy fears.

How full of compassion and long-suffering is Jehovah, and how fitly is he styled the "GOD of Love," (1 John iv. 8,) not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance! He casts off no sinner, till the sinner first casts off his allegiance to GOD, and hardens his heart against every admonition.

Cain, notwithstanding this solemn warning and merciful declaration, still continues to harbor the most deadly malignity in his heart. His innocent and righteous brother remains the object of his hatred, and why? Is it because he has been more favored by his parents than Cain, or that he has assumed any pretence of authority over him? No; "he hates him because his own works are evil and his brother's righteous." 1 John iii. 12. And this has always been the case with the wicked, and it ever will be so; for darkness is not more opposite to light than evil is to goodness, and they who love the one cannot endure the other. There are some animals that, on the appearance

THE HYENA.

of dawn, disappear into dark coverts, and remain there till the curtain of night again envelopes the world, when they issue forth in quest of their prey. In them we have an exact emblem of the wicked, who naturally hate the light of truth, and have moreover a deadly animosity against those who walk in righteousness. They who love iniquity, hate the virtuous and pious, because their tempers and their pursuits are different from their own. The reputation and lustre of genuine piety only serve to make vice appear more deformed and odious. The wicked man, therefore, being conscious that his own character and principles will not stand the test of comparison, has a rooted enmity against those who are beautifully called in Scripture "the children of the light and of the day." Thess. v. 5. In Abel we behold the mild, open, and unsuspecting man of religion; in his brother the malicious, dark, and treacherous emissary of Satan.

"Righteous Abel," (Matt. xxiii. 35,) as he is emphatically styled by the blessed Redeemer, conscious of his own integrity, and entertaining no jealousy or resentment in his own mind, freely enters into conversation with Cain his brother, who in the midst of the discourse rises suddenly up and murders him.

This crime, which is the highest in the scale of guilt, stands aggravated in the present instance to an unparalleled degree by the circumstances which attend it. An elder brother is the natural protector of the younger part of the family, but Cain breaks the tenderest of social ties and obligations without any provocation. He has been cautioned by a voice from heaven against the indulgence of that envious spirit which is the source of every evil. Notwithstanding this, he takes his brother aside into a lonely place, and discourses with him apparently in friendship for the express purpose of assassinating him—and for what? merely because Abel was a "righteous man," or one who made conscience his rule in all things.

Thus the first man on whom the sentence of death is inflicted, becomes a martyr for his religion. Cain, without remorse, and evidently from premeditated design, pours out the blood of his brother as a sacrifice to the father of evil, to whose guidance he has submitted himself, in opposition to the warning voice of Heaven. Abel offers up his life passively as an innocent sacrifice for the truth; and his blood cries to Heaven from the ground. Nor is the voice unheard. Though no human eye beheld the atrocious murder, the eye of omniscience marked every part of the scene. Cain, perhaps, took some pains, after he had effected his sanguinary purpose, to conceal the mangled remains of righteous Abel from the searching eye of man, but could he hide the circumstance from GOD? No. Judgment soon overtakes him, and a voice from heaven thus addresses him: "Where is Abel thy brother?" The question, one might naturally suppose, would have pierced the inmost soul of the culprit, and have produced a horrible dread, at least, if not remorse of conscience. But this is not the case. Cain's heart is still as hard as adamant. He has the shameless audacity to utter a flat falsehood in the face of GOD himself. "I know not, (says he.) Am I my brother's keeper?" Gen. iv. 9. This reply shows that his conscience was "seared as with a hot iron," and was become callous to every feeling of shame. He has no concern for the heinous crime of which he has been guilty. He feels no compunction for having robbed his parents of their comfort. He laments not his own ungovernable temper. He repents not his having called down the vengeance of an offended GOD upon his head. His whole behavior is of a piece, and exhibits a man lost to every sense of humanity and religion. After a gentle examination which has proved fruitless, the ALMIGHTY proceeds at once to accuse and to punish the unnatural criminal before him. "And he said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."

Nature is here represented as setting her face against one who has violated the tenderest of social ties. The earth is made to harden her bosom against the cruel wretch, who could so far conquer every fraternal feeling as to shed the blood of his unoffending brother. Divine vengeance must and will awake against a monster so abandoned; and the judgment pronounced is just. The ground receives another curse on account of Cain's transgression. Thus moral evil continues to multiply natural evil. The earth increases in sterility, at least to Cain. He may labor, but it shall be in vain; he may sow, but he shall not reap. Henceforth he must depend for his subsistence upon what he may casually obtain. Not only so, but he is to be an outcast

and a wanderer upon the face of the earth. What resting-place can that man have who is exiled from God, and who has a gnawing conscience, a never-dying worm in his breast? Punishment will necessarily follow guilt; and though a man may contrive to evade the vengeance of human laws, he cannot escape from the accusing severity of his own reflections, and the terrors of his affrighted imagination. These will conjure up a thousand enemies where there are in reality none; and will present to the mind of the sinner formidable dangers in places where there is nothing to fear. No one can adequately conceive the agony of a "wounded spirit," but the wretched being who has made Heaven his enemy. All is hell, and torment, and misery in that bosom. When awake he is afraid, and his thoughts revolve upon his crime and its consequences: he wishes for the night season, that he may lie down under the covert of darkness, and enjoy in sleep some cessation from his pain. But even here his desire is mocked; for the irritated spirit cannot be lulled into quiet even when the eyes are closed, and the bodily senses are locked up in torpor. Then in dreams the wretch reviews his guilty act, and starts at some horrible phantom ready to take vengeance upon him for his transgression.

Such was the situation of Cain. He felt the hot fire of hell in his soul, and cried out, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." The fratricide can feel the lash, though he is insensible to genuine repentance. He can complain of the punishment, though he has no sorrow of heart for the sin which occasioned it This is often the case with the wicked. When their iniquity is discovered, and their secret enormities are dragged to light and justice, they express acute anguish and sorrow, which result not from compunction, but from a fearful apprehension of what is to follow. Thus Cain, on hearing his sentence, is afraid "that every one who meets him will slay him." This fear was certainly natural enough; for the murderer no longer belongs to society. He has cut himself off from all right to social union, reciprocal offices of humanity, and even to life itself, by depriving another of his existence. Cain is therefore apprehensive that every one's hand will be raised against him to avenge the death of the righteous Abel. Here, however, the ALMIGHTY interposes, and expressly forbids any to punish the wretch who has fallen into his hand. It is added, that to prevent this, God set a particular mark or sign upon the fugitive, which should make him known wherever he wandered. What this mark was is not mentioned, nor does it concern us to know it. All that is necessary for the regulation of our faith and practice is plainly laid down in the Bible; and where no information is given, it is evident that inquiry is not necessary.

Many needless observations have been made respecting the land of Nod, in which it is said that Cain took up his residence after the murder of his brother. *Nod* signifies in Hebrew simply *vagabond;* and nothing more is meant in the text than that Cain went into the country eastward as a *vagabond*, leading a wandering life, a prey to corroding fear and remorse.

Petty infidels, ever ready to find fault with sacred writ, have endeavored to impeach the veracity of Moses as an historian, by inquiring "how Cain could fear being killed in a distant country, when we read of no other children that Adam then possessed?" This futile objection is easily answered; for if Adam had then no more sons, he doubtless had daughters who were married to Cain and Abel, for the latter could not be less than one hundred and twenty-five at the time of his death. Now by supposing them to marry at the age of nineteen or twenty, and to have grandchildren, the earth must have had, at that period, some thousands of inhabitants. Cain had, therefore, just grounds to apprehend that some of Abel's descendants would avenge upon him the death of their pious relative. The wretched exile at length planted a colony, and built himself a city. This precaution resulted from the same principle of fear; for guilt is always allied to cowardice, and never thinks itself safe from attack.

Concerning the fate of Cain we are ignorant; and it can afford us no satisfaction to trace the progress of a wicked man to the death-bed of horror and remorse.

The ingenious author of an elegant romance upon the "Death of Abel." has indeed made Cain a penitent, and softened down the harsh features of his character in such a manner, as to lead the unwary reader into a belief that the miserable fratricide at length obtained the divine forgiveness. We have certainly nothing to do with the secret dispensations of Providence in its disposal of men after death; but the greatest stretch of charity can hope for nothing in favor of Cain, who is expressly said to "belong to the devil."

"Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days."— *Psalm* lv. verse 23.

Here, then, we stop to pause upon the awful story we have been contemplating. In Abel we behold a righteous man falling beneath the murderous hand of his elder brother. The ways of Heaven are mysterious; and when inconsiderate man observes such scenes as this, he is apt to question the rectitude of the divine proceedings. But the time is not yet come for us to form a judgment upon these dispensations. God cannot possibly err or do wrong. It is therefore our place to submit humbly to his will, and to acquiesce in his providential dealings.

Abel rose from a wretched world of corruption and trouble to a crown of righteousness which fadeth not away, happy in being the first of the human kind who obtained a seat in the heavenly paradise, even though it was by a violent death. In him certainly we have a lively type of the blessed Redeemer. Abel was a shepherd, and doth not Jesus Christ call himself the "good shepherd who giveth his life for the sheep?" Abel presented an offering unto the Lord of the very best of his flock, as a

Eastern Shepherd.

sacrifice of atonement for his own sins; but Christ made an offering of himself as a lamb, without spot and without blemish, for the sins of the world. The blood of Abel cried unto Heaven from the ground for vengeance upon the murderer; but the blood of Christ "speaks better things than the blood of Abel," (Heb. xii. 24,) being shed to procure pardon and peace for guilty man. Abel fell by the unnatural hands of his brother, and that for righteousness' sake. Christ was betrayed by a favored disciple, and crucified at the instigation of his brethren the Jews, though he was declared innocent by the governor who condemned him.

Here the parallel closes. But what abundant and various matter of instruction may we not gather from the whole narrative! How should we learn to crush every envious and jealous principle in the bud, lest it rankle in our hearts, and render us miserable to ourselves and odious to all around us! In Abel we perceive the beauty and excellence of true religion; it has crowned him with immortality and honor: in Cain we see the deformity of irreligion; it has covered him with shame, and transmitted him to far-distant posterity as an object of universal detestation.

ENOCH.

TRANSLATED IN THE YEAR OF THE WORLD 988, AGED 365.

HERE are many characters in the sacred history of whom, though they were the excellent of the earth, little memorial is recorded. While the narratives of some are drawn out at great length, and even the actions of wicked men are delineated in copious and expressive language, the names of the most pious and extraordinary persons are just passed over with some striking epithet, which leaves a pleasing regret in our minds that more is not said of them. They appear for a moment to excite our admiration, and are then removed, without having fully gratified our curiosity. The busiest life is not always the best; and that which is drawn out to the greatest extent, or varied with the greatest number of incidents, is not the most to be envied. He who pursues the "noiseless tenor of his way," keeping closely in the path of duty, and living in communion with his GOD, is a far higher character than the bustling and illustrious man of the world.

Short is the account given of the patriarch Enoch, but the character which he bears, and the circumstance recorded of him, render his name peculiarly venerable, and present him to our notice as a personage of great importance.

He was born in the year of the world 623, and, being contemporary with Adam, he had every opportunity of learning from his lips the story of the creation, the circumstance of the fall, the terms of the promise, and other valuable truths. Enoch profited by his intimacy with the venerable father of the human race, and his mind became richly stored with wisdom. An ancient author affirms that he was the father of astrology, or rather of astronomy; and Eusebius hence infers, that he is the same with the Atlas of the Grecian Mythology. There is, indeed, great reason to believe that most of the deities of that mythology are but Scripture characters grossly corrupted; but whether the present conjecture is well founded matters little. Enoch's fame rests upon a better basis than upon his real or reputed skill in astronomy. Although that science is noble and divine, tending to enlarge the ideas of man, and to fill his mind with reverence for the great CREATOR of the universe, yet the profoundest knowledge of it is less valuable than an acquaintance with divine truth, and the cultivation of moral excellence. To subdue the proud and irregular passions of the mind, to live above the vanities of the world, and in a constant obedience to the will of Heaven, is a course infinitely more exalted than the pursuit of earthly wisdom. A man may be able to name all the stars at sight, to calculate their distances, and to ascertain their magnitudes with extreme accuracy: he may also be able to enumerate and class the different orders of plants, from the "cedar which groweth on Lebanon to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall," 1 Kings iv. 33; he may, moreover, be minutely acquainted with the various tribes of animals, the properties of minerals, and have besides the most extensive knowledge of men and things—yet with all this store of information he may be still poor and ignorant, knowing nothing of the value of his immortal soul, having no acquaintance with religious truth, nor enjoying any communion with GOD.

JEW WORSHIPPING WITH THE HEAD COVERED.

The encomium of Enoch is, that "he walked with GOD." Gen. v. 24. He might trace the divine footsteps in the works of creation and providence, but the expression implies something more particular and endearing. Enoch is here represented as the friend and companion of the ALMIGHTY; and, the Scripture elsewhere remarks, that "two cannot walk together except they are agreed." This *walking together* implies a cordial sympathy and mutual love and esteem; the very thing intended by the historian in his description of the patriarch. Enoch was not contented with a mere formal profession of religion, or with a general acknowledgment of his belief in a Deity: but his soul was filled with love to GOD: a warm and lively sense of the divine presence occupied his mind, and his faculties were rendered wholly subservient unto the divine will. He studied constantly to keep his thoughts, words, and actions in a strict conformity to the holy law of GOD, from pleasure and not from fear. His morning vows ascended to the eternal throne, his active hours were employed in doing good, and the evening was shut in with grateful thanksgiving to the GOD of his mercies.

In this course every good man walks with GOD, as Enoch did; and it is only by such a course that any one can find comfort and satisfaction in this varied, troublesome, and sinful world. But Enoch, in consideration of his splendid virtues, was admitted to a very near intercourse with the ALMIGHTY. St. Jude calls him a prophet, and he appears to have been the first who obtained that honorable character.

In his time the world was become sadly corrupted and given to idolatry; so soon did sin and infidelity spread among the sons of men. The fall of Adam quickly produced evils in abundance. The next circumstance recorded is the murder of Abel, soon after which we read of the introduction of polygamy by Lamech; and before the death of Adam iniquity seems to have covered almost the whole earth.

Amidst this dismal scene of corruption, one bright exception was found in the person of Enoch. While mankind at large were living in open rebellion against Heaven, and provoking the divine vengeance daily by their ungodly deeds, he obtained this exalted testimony, "that he pleased GOD." This he did not only by the exemplary tenor of his life, and by the attention which he paid to the outward services of religion, but by the soundness of his faith and the purity of his zeal. St. Paul speaks thus of him: "By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death, and was not found, because GOD had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased GOD. For without faith it is impossible to please GOD: for he

that cometh to GOD must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. xi. 5, 6.

The intent of the apostle, in the discourse whence this passage is taken, is, to show that there has been but one way of obtaining the divine favor ever since the fall, and that is by *faith*, or a firm belief in the atonement to be made for human transgression, by the obedience, sufferings, and death of the MESSIAH. The cloud of witnesses which the apostle has produced of Old Testament worthies all bore, in their respective generations, their testimony to this great doctrine, in opposition to the moral theism and gross idolatry which prevailed around them. All the patriarchs are celebrated for their being faithful to this great truth, and for preserving this principle of pure religion in the midst of a corrupt and crooked generation. Enoch, therefore, is said, by another evangelical writer, to have preached CHRIST unto the antediluvian sinners; a position strange and unnatural, if the knowledge of the MESSIAH was not communicated to man at that early period. The words of the apostle are remarkable: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the LORD cometh with ten thousand of his saints: to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Jude 14, 15.

This prophecy is a clear and it is also an awful description of the day of judgment, when the MESSIAH shall sit upon his throne of justice to determine the final condition of mankind according to their works. Where the apostle found this prediction has been matter of much speculation and inquiry. Some, indeed, have produced a spurious treatise, called "The Book of Enoch," which they pretend contains the cited passage; but its authority is not proved, and there fore it is to be supposed that either the prophecy was traditional, or that it was specially revealed to St. Jude.

Thus Enoch was found faithful in his generation, not only as a pious and an upright man, but as a powerful preacher of righteousness. His mind, strengthened and directed by the Spirit of GOD, penetrated through a long series of intervening ages, and beheld the incarnation and death of the MESSIAH, saw him rise triumphant from the grave, then ascend to the throne of GOD, and, lastly, at the consummation of all things, descend in glory, surrounded with his holy angels, as the judge of all the earth.

The patriarch, being grieved at the abominations which he beheld every day, denounced the terrors of the ALMIGHTY against the authors of them with that zeal which became one who had received a divine commission. He was not content with living according to the rule of righteousness himself, but it was his desire to see the authority of GOD universally respected. It is impossible that we can hear the name of the object we love slightingly spoken of, without expressing a friendly zeal. And can any one pretend to love GOD, and be unconcerned at seeing his holy name, his law, his word, and his ordinances despised and blasphemed? Where this love is really seated in the heart, there will be a zeal for all that concerns the honor of GOD and for the credit of religion. This will be not a blind, persecuting spirit, mixed up of bigotry, prejudice, and conceit, but an open, generous, confident readiness to defend truth, to reprove vice, and to confute error. A person of this disposition may be despised by the ignorant and wicked, and he may be spurned by the proud man and the philosopher, but his name shall be recorded with honor; the good of every age will mention him with reverence; and, at the great day of account, he shall receive the approbation of GOD himself, in the presence of an assembled world.

The divine favor eminently distinguisheth the righteous man both in life and death. It is true he may not enjoy great distinctions among men, he may not roll in riches, or be cried up as a prodigy of wisdom and genius, but he will possess an inward comfort and pleasure which the world can neither give nor take away. While he "walks with GOD," who is the fountain of all good, he cannot but enjoy serenity of mind, which is above every earthly delight. The sense of the divine favor is a cordial to him in every trying season, and sweetens every calamity. If he is visited by affliction, or is deprived of any temporal good, he sorrows not as those who have no hope, but he is comforted by the consideration that he "has an inheritance beyond the skies which fadeth not away." There "remaineth a rest for the people of GOD," (Heb. iv. 9,) even a mansion of bliss, where no pain shall torment, no sin defile, nor any wicked to trouble them. They who "walk with GOD" in the path of holy duty and virtue, continue to have that glorious state before them in every circumstance of life. Prosperity does not

dazzle them, adversity does not depress them. The view of death and eternity, in the former case, keeps them humble, and, in the latter, it cheers their hearts, to consider that the time is coming when all trouble shall be done away, and when tears shall be for ever wiped from their eyes.

In the departure of Enoch from this world of sin and sorrow, the ALMIGHTY altered the ordinary course of things, and gave him a dismissal as honorable to himself as it was instructive to mankind. To convince them that holiness only was acceptable with him, and that he had prepared for those who love him a mansion of glory, he caused Enoch to be taken from earth to heaven without passing through death.

We have only three instances of this assumption of a human body into heaven upon record; that of Enoch, and those of Elijah and JESUS CHRIST, all in distinct and remote ages of the world.

Thus in distant periods of time did GOD vouchsafe to give men a demonstrative proof of the reality of a future state. And this, in the antediluvian world, was peculiarly necessary, being strikingly calculated to impress the minds of men with a belief of a most important truth, which, through their long residence here, they might be apt to forget. Enoch, a public character of eminent gifts and virtues, a preacher of righteousness, and an exemplar of holy living, is taken up into heaven, without enduring the customary pangs of dissolving nature, or becoming a lifeless and putrid corpse. Such an instance could not but produce much observation among his contemporaries, and the circumstance doubtless was carefully handed down from one generation to another with wonder and reverence. But if this is a proof of the doctrine of a future state, it is no less an evidence of that of the resurrection; for if corruption is thus made to inherit incorruption, if that which is mortal is made to put on immortality, and a perishable body is translated into the realms of eternal life, why should it be deemed a thing incredible that GOD should raise the dead? Does it require a greater act of power to recover the sleeping and scattered ashes of the dead from the dust of the ground, or from the waters of the ocean, than to raise the body and soul of a man from earth to heaven?

Both are equally miraculous, and both are equally the same to Him, who by his word created all things out of nothing.

Let us, then, humbly believe and adore the divine goodness, who, in raising Enoch, Elijah, and JESUS CHRIST, has given us a powerful assurance that he will raise up also us at the last day. But let this consideration also beget in us the resolution of taking the word of GOD for our conduct in this life, that we may not fail of receiving a glorious habitation in the life to come. By faith and holiness we shall pass through the dark and perplexing paths of this sinful world, as the friends of GOD, who will at last cause us to be brought into his presence, where, with Enoch and with all the holy men of old, patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs, the good and pious of every age and clime, we shall partake fulness of pure joy, and taste of divine pleasure for evermore.

NOAH.

BORN IN THE YEAR OF THE WORLD, 1057; ENTERED THE ARK IN 1656; DIED IN 2007.

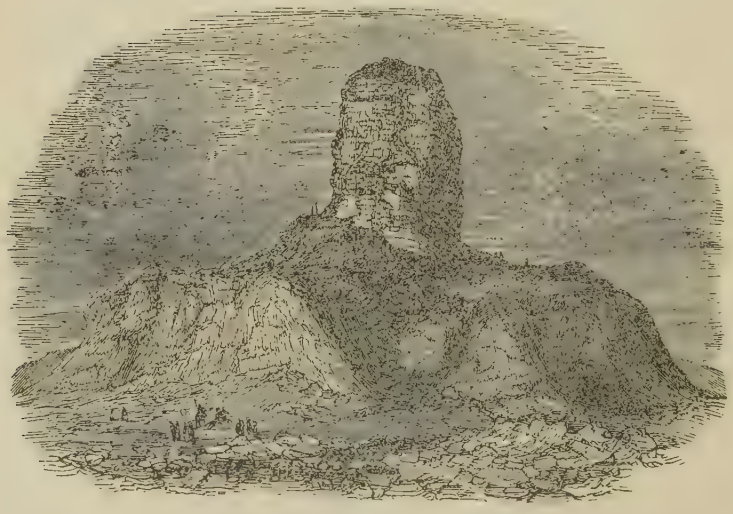
THOUGH mercy and goodness are the most distinguished characteristics of the ALMIGHTY, yet his judgments are terrible, certain, and just. He forbears long with the wickedness of men, and he withholds his vengeance from falling on their guilty heads till their cup of iniquity is full, and justice necessarily takes the place of mercy. The long-suffering of GOD, when contrasted with the impiety and ingratitude of man, will, to the humble mind, always account for the awful visitations of Providence, and for those seeming inequalities in the moral government of the world, which so often perplex the most inconsiderate, and disturb even the most pious persons.

At the birth of NOAH, which was in the one thousand and fifty-seventh year of the world, the earth was full of inhabitants, and iniquity had increased in an equal proportion with population. The father of this great patriarch was Lamech, the son of Methuselah, who died at the age of nine hundred and sixty-nine. The father of Methuselah was Enoch, that eminent man, who was no less remarkable for the holiness of his life than for the manner of his departure into heaven. Thus the history of the creation, and the most important truths of religion, could easily be transmitted through a long space of time, without being liable to misrepresentation or perversion. Adam communicated all his knowledge to Enoch, and that venerable man committed the precious deposite to Methuselah, if not, indeed, to Noah himself. This was a wise and gracious order of things, which could not so well have been answered if the age of man had been limited within the narrow boundaries to which it is now confined.

But with all the advantages of religious information possessed by the inhabitants of the old world, the history of them is black in the extreme. One or two pious exceptions only are recorded, while the rest are represented as being so wicked, as "to grieve the Spirit of God" (Gen. vi. 6) by their iniquity. For a considerable time, it seems, the children of Cain, and those of the other branches of Adam's family, kept at a distance from each other. The former were exceedingly ingenious, and made a number of discoveries, some of a mechanical nature, serviceable to the purposes of life, and others in the way of elegant refinement. The latter were distinguished by the simplicity of their manners, and their adherence to the worship and service of the true GOD. In time, however, the boundaries of this division grew narrower, and the "sons of God," (Gen. vi. 4,) as they are emphatically called, became enamored of the beauty and accomplishments of the females of Cain's posterity, and formed marriages with them. From improper connexions nothing but evil can proceed. Indiscreet marriages are the sources of numerous calamities which disturb society and imbitter private life.

The attractive influence of these women soon corrupted the pious principles of their husbands. The female possessed of all other accomplishments, and yet devoid of religious sentiments, is a most dangerous companion for a man of sobriety, who is desirous of serving GOD with all his house. Her authority and persuasions will only weaken his virtuous resolutions, or counteract his endeavors. Children and domestics will entertain but little respect for religion while the mistress of the family slights it by her neglect, or sets herself in direct opposition to its institutions. A pious woman may do much good in conjunction with her husband; but one of an opposite character is certain of doing considerable mischief. Let all young persons, therefore, of either sex, be particularly careful in examining the characters and principles of those who

Mount Ararat.



Tel Nimrood.

offer themselves to them as partners for life. It is a momentous consideration, and it is in this view that we are enabled to account for so many unhappy marriages. at least a very powerful reason hence appears why so many turn out uncomfortable on both sides. A person of libertine sentiments will rarely prove an agreeable partner. It is true, the example of a pious companion may have some influence upon the vitiated mind, and in some cases it may effect a reformation. But this is a risk too great to be ventured, and common prudence will forbid the running into it, because the chances against such a happy event are innumerable. It is a dreadful hazard, and may be considered with justice as nothing better than rash presumption.

The story we are reviewing is a practical illustration of these remarks, and warns all who have been trained up in the way of virtue against forming connexions with the vain, the vicious, and the profane.

The good was soon swallowed up through the prevalence of iniquity. The blandishments of vice prevailed. Gay amusements paved the way to immorality, and the neglect of devotion led to infidelity and idolatry. A familiar association with the wicked will soon contaminate the most virtuous mind, and destroy the influence of religious principle. They who once enjoyed the high distinction of being called the "sons of GOD," became, in a short time, as corrupt as their licentious partners, so that there was scarcely a vestige of true religion left upon the earth. The offspring of these promiscuous marriages are called in Scripture *giants*, not perhaps on account of their extraordinary stature, but their abominable height in wickedness. It is a most dismal and shocking picture which the sacred historian draws of the manners of the old world, when by a bold figure of speech he describes the whole human race as but one man, "the thought of whose heart was only evil continually."

The seat of iniquity is undoubtedly in the heart, whence proceeds every species of crime; but it is a dreadful thing when a man is so lost to all sense of shame, to all idea of virtue and desire of reformation, as to have a continual thirst for evil, without one intervening moment of consideration and remorse. Amid the general disorder of society it is to be hoped there are some persons who mourn for the corruption which they cannot stem, and charity "hopeth all things," even when it beholds a sinner in a furious career to destruction.

The condition of the old world, however, is described as remediless, and sunk in universal atheism, with the solitary exception of a single family. Amid all this moral darkness one star was found, whose example was calculated to recommend religion, and to excite in men some sorrow for their misdeeds. But though Noah was an eminent preacher of righteousness, and walked with God in all holy worship and obedience, he could not prevail in his attempts to reform an ungodly race. He continued, however, to persevere in the pious work, though he saw no good effects resulting from it. The patriarch had faith in GOD, and he knew that it was his duty to labor with unremitting zeal in the province to which he was called, leaving the event to Him from whom he had received his commission.

Nothing can be more honorable than to stand firm and singular in a time of general infidelity and corruption. A man of unshaken principle, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, is a character both rare and beautiful. But though many may be disposed to admire, in expression at least, the account of such a person, yet how few will be animated to imitate his example!

This, however, we are all called upon to do, even within our respective stations and among our connexions, how confined or few soever they may be. In the present state, vice will always have a predominating influence in society; and corrupt principles and evil customs will be so prevalent as to require no ordinary strength of mind to keep us from being affected by the contagion. What, then, is that man to do who would wish to preserve a good conscience, and to ensure to himself inward peace and everlasting happiness? He must maintain his integrity as firm as a rock of adamant, and be, if I may hazard the expression, obstinately virtuous, neither deviating to the right hand nor to the left, in compliance with the evil customs of the age in which he lives. The advice of Wisdom should ever be on the minds of youth: "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Prov. i. 10. Let the young adventurer consider the character of the party who endeavors to persuade him to any indulgence, and then the nature and the consequences of the thing itself. He may hereby be able to resist temptation, and, like the holy men of old, live unspotted in the midst of a corrupt generation. Noah was found faithful to his GOD when the whole world lay

in wickedness. Like his ancestor Enoch, he is said to have "walked with GOD," and like him, he was eminently distinguished by the divine favor and protection. To such a man how afflicting must have been the increasing infidelity and immorality of the age! The pious and benevolent always feel a tender concern and grief for the moral as well as for the natural diseases of mankind. It indicates little acquaintance with virtue and religion, and little regard for the laws and honor of GOD, when we can behold the spreading of vice and profaneness with indifference. The mere moralist will be concerned at these evils, from the regard which he has for regular order and for the political good of society; but the truly religious character will be impressed with a deeper concern from love to his GOD, and from an affectionate regard for his fellow-creatures. A holy zeal will animate his mind, when he sees the institutes and commandments of the ALMIGHTY set at naught; and, as the Psalmist says, "rivers of waters will run down his eyes, because men keep not GOD's law." Ps. cxix. 136.

Noah was a man of this description, and to an unbelieving and inconsiderate world he declared the whole counsel of GOD with fidelity. He did not conceal his divine commission through fear, or pervert it from a regard to personal convenience or advantage; but he protested with earnestness against the sins of his contemporaries, their idolatry, violence, debauchery, and injustice. His preaching, however, and his example were alike inefficacious. The patience of GOD was tried long, and his mercy spared a corrupt world for a great number of years. At length the divine justice is awakened. The abominations of mankind become too offensive to be borne with any longer, and therefore the LORD is represented as saying, "I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them." Gen. vi. 7.

But before the fierce anger of the LORD goes forth, care must be taken that the righteous do not perish with the wicked. GOD will always remember those who put their trust in him, and in the midst of his judgments he will provide a shelter for his obedient servants from the raging evil. In his love and in his mercy they shall be secure till the "calamity be overpast." Isa. xxvi. 20.

Having expressed his resolution of destroying the whole race of sinners, except the family of Noah, he commands the patriarch to build "an ark for the saving of his house." Heb. xi. 7. At the same time he gives him directions of what wood and fashion the vessel shall be formed. "Make thee an ark of gopher-wood, rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: the length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make in the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou make it above: and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof: with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. And behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark; thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. And of every thing of all flesh, two of every sort, thalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee: they shall be

GOPHER WOOD (*Cupressus sempervirens*).

THE LEOPARD.

male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee to keep them alive. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be food for thee and for them." Gen. vi. 14–21.

Noah was no way staggered at this extraordinary and arduous task, but instantly set about the performance of it, knowing whence he had received it, and that "the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever, and that the judgments of the LORD are pure and righteous altogether." Psa. xix. 8, 9.

He began this great work in the year of the world 1537, and in the four hundred and eightieth year of his age. It took up one hundred and twenty years in building; and hence some have objected to the truth of the story, on the ground that part of it, at least, must have decayed before the finishing of the whole work. An answer to this is easy, for if the ark was made of cypress-wood, it was, as is allowed by the best writers, insensible of rottenness or age;* and in the country about Babylon, where it is generally admitted the ark was built, cypress-trees grew in great abundance. The pitch also which was used by Noah was of a quality very different from that now in use, being bitumen, or fat clay, which is impenetrable by the worm or water.†

Allowing the cubit to be eighteen inches, it will make the ark to contain one million seven hundred and eighty-one thousand three hundred and forty-six cubical feet, or forty-two thousand four hundred and thirteen tons. The figure of this vast unwieldy body was not like that of modern vessels, but a long square with a flat bottom, that it might be less liable to be tossed or tumbled about by the violence of the winds and waves, and that it might fix firmly upon the land when the flood should be over.

A great number of persons must necessarily have been employed in this prodigious work, the greatest part of whom perished in the flood. Thus many are externally engaged in promoting the interests of the church of GOD, and serve in various respects to advance the purposes of divine Providence, without knowing what they are doing, or having any desire to do good in their hearts. Many will be found wanting at the

* Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. 16, cap. 40. Thucydides, lib. 2, p. 55.
† Diod. Siculus, lib. 2. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 35, cap. 15.

last day, who now enjoy the privilege of belonging to a Christian church, and who acknowledge, in profession at least, their need of salvation by the merits of a Mediator.

The project of Noah, doubtless, excited much observation and various conjectures. By the trifling and impertinent he was ridiculed as an old fool; and by those who pretended to some judgment and wisdom he was treated as a poor enthusiast, led away by the gloomy folly of superstition. Some of his friends, perhaps, pitied his extravagance, and offered him their advice to renounce his laborious and ruinous enterprise; till, finding all their remonstrances ineffectual, they left the dotard to his whim, and plunged into all the sinful courses of their companions. But, steady to his purpose, and faithful to the divine order, Noah completed the ark, and covered it with thick cloths, or the skins of animals fastened together in such a manner, that they might be easily drawn close, in case of storms and cold weather, or be opened again whenever light or fresh air were wanted.

Everything being now prepared, all the animals destined for preservation move by instinct to take shelter in the ark from the impending storm. The power of God restrains the wild and ferocious tribes, and makes them tame and obedient; while the timid and weak lose all sense of fear, and take their allotted places, as if conscious of the desolation which is coming upon the earth. But though the brute creation are eager to take refuge with Noah, mankind at large still continue deaf to his warnings, and are inattentive to their danger. The ark and its builder are but the objects of mirth and derision; and we learn from divine authority, that on the very day when the patriarch and his family entered their new habitation, the rest of mankind continued immersed in sensual pleasures. Matt. xxiv. 38. But their season of festivity is short, judgment is at the door, and ready to sweep off the impious wretches in the midst of their mad career. The day of grace, though long, will have its close, and sinners may harden their hearts till there is no redemption. No sooner is the valuable cargo safely shipped, and Noah with his wife and children entered, but the ALMIGHTY with a tender care is said to "shut them in." Gen. vii. 16. All access to the only place of refuge is from that moment prevented. The clouds of heaven begin now to gather thick, and the darkened atmosphere to threaten a most tremendous storm. The winds howl with impetuous rage, and torrents of water are poured down from on high, while the fountains of the great deep are broken up from beneath. All is horror and desolation. They who yesterday scoffed at the righteous Noah, and carelessly viewed the miraculous procession of animals to the ark, begin to lament their folly, and try to save themselves. Many climb about the sides of the ark, in hopes of being taken in, but are disregarded. Others hasten to the house-tops, which soon sink away beneath the undermining waters. Some climb the loftiest trees, and others ascend the mighty hills, whence they behold with painful anxiety the dismal wreck of nature, mixed with some degree of hope that their own refuge is secure. But their confidence is vain. There is no abatement in the storm. Rushing cataracts soon sweep down the wretched fugitives from their last retreat, and the lofty mountains themselves yield to the devouring element, so that nothing can be seen but one mighty sheet of water, with the solitary ark floating upon it. "Great and marvellous are thy works, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints! Who shall not fear thee, O LORD, and glorify thy name? for thy judgments are made manifest!" Rev. xv. 3, 4.

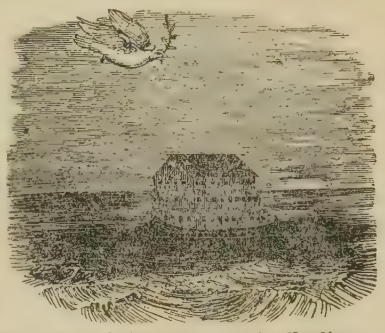
The waters were at the highest in forty days, but the abatement was much slower; for had the fall been rapid, the whole surface of the land would have exhibited the most forbidding aspect of inaccessible precipices, tremendous rocks, and unfathomable gulfs, instead of the present moderately varied scene of hill and valley.

Noah entered the ark with his wife, his three sons, and their wives, on Saturday, November the twenty-seventh, in the year of the world one thousand six hundred and fifty-seven, and either then, or more probably the day following, the flood began. On Monday, the eleventh of July, when the days were at the longest, and just before the entrance of the sun into the tropical sign of cancer, "the tops of the mountains" became visible from the ark. At the end of forty days, or on Saturday, the twentieth of August, Noah sent out the raven, a bird of quick scent, to discover whether the earth was become dry. But this bird, as the Hebrew text expresses it, spent its time "in going forth and returning:" (Gen. viii. 7:) that is, finding nothing but water, it hovered about the ark, till at length, according to the story of the Jews, observing some carcasses upon the top of a mountain, it returned no more. At the end of seven days, or on the next Saturday, Noah "sent forth a dove," being a bird of strong flight, loving to feed upon

THE DELUGE.—Page 36.

Storm of Thunder and Rain.

the ground, and to pick up seeds, and constantly returning to its customary rest from the greatest distances. But the dove not finding any footing returned again to the ark. Noah waited with patience yet seven days longer, and then sent out the same messenger, which returned the same evening with an olive-branch in its mouth, and thus the patriarch knew that the waters were gone off even from the valleys, though, as the dove could not rest there, it was evident that the earth still remained cold and moist. At the end of seven days he again sent forth the dove, which returned not unto him any more; a plain proof that it neither wanted food nor a nest to repose itself, so that Noah hence understood that the earth was become both firm and fruitful.



On the fifth day of the first month, or on the second day of October, one thousand six hundred and fifty-eight, Noah removed the covering of the ark, and ascended to the roof, that he might take a view of the land, which he found clear of the water, and affording a delightful prospect. The sensations of the patriarch after so long a confinement, and the experience of such a wonderful deliverance, must have been peculiarly affecting and delightful. To look back upon the world, and reflect that in so short a space all his contemporaries were swept away into eternity by the avenging hand of GOD; to see the face of creation materially changed, and no trace of former scenes remaining, could not but produce a melting sentiment of concern in the mind of a benevolent man. But then the idea of what he owed to the preserving goodness of the ALMIGHTY, which had kept him thus miraculously safe with his family in the midst of such an awful revolution, soon converted his melancholy reflections into lively gratitude, and the sigh of tender recollection into a song of praise. Noah was not impatient to enter upon the possession of the world, though he had been kept for so long a space in close confinement. As he had taken up his residence in the ark by divine appointment, so he waits for special direction ere he will venture to depart from it. Happy are those persons who commit their concerns into the hand of Providence, and who consult the will of the ALMIGHTY as their only director in the affairs of life!

On Sunday, November the twenty-seventh, GOD commanded Noah to leave the ark, with all the creatures that were therein. This disembarkation took up no less than SIX days, and the day following was set apart for rest and for the public worship of GOD the preserver. Noah accordingly erected an altar to the LORD, and having taken of every clean beast and every clean fowl, he made an offering thereon of thanksgiving for the deliverance he had experienced, and of atonement to avert the wrath of Heaven for his own sins, and for those of the people who were with him.

Thus the rites of divine service, which had been observed before the flood, were renewed by Noah, and transmitted by him to his sons, that they and their posterity might follow the same till the revelation of the divine will should be more clearly revealed. This offering of the patriarch, proceeding from a thankful heart, was acceptable to GOD, who is therefore said to have "smelled a sweet savor," and to resolve with himself that "he would no more curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart be evil from his youth." Gen. viii. 21.

The same day the divine Majesty appeared unto Noah and his sons, assuring them of his power and protection, renewing the blessing bestowed upon Adam, with the grant of animal food for their subsistence, only with this exception, that they should not eat the flesh with the blood thereof. The ALMIGHTY also forbids murder, as being contrary to the commandment which he had given to man, to increase and multiply. And though he had formerly interposed his authority in the case of Cain, the first murderer, prohibiting any one from killing him, yet he now gives power to men to inquire for blood, and to avenge that crime, by putting the murderer to death. And as GOD gives laws to the first inhabitants of the new world, so he establishes his covenant with them, that he will no more bring in a devouring deluge upon it. This covenant he confirms by the sign of a rainbow in the clouds, occasioned by the reflection of the opposite sunbeams from the falling drops of rain. Some will have it, that there must have been a rainbow before the flood; but the tenor of the declaration to Noah evident-

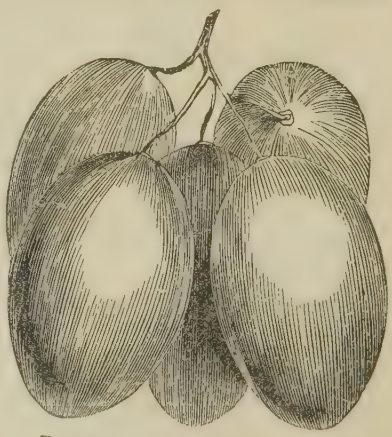
NOAH OFFERING SACRIFICES

ly implies that it was a phenomenon which had not been seen by him in the antediluvian world.

THE RAINBOW.

Had this object been familiar to Noah, it would not have made much impression upon him, whereas the novelty and beauty of the bow, in the present instance, could not but affect his mind with gratitude and confidence.

Noah, who was six hundred years old when he came out of the ark, settled in the neighborhood of the spot where he landed, and enjoyed great tranquillity for the space of one hundred years, when an incident occurred which broke the peace of his family, and occasioned their dispersion. He appears to have been the first who invented presses to extract the juice of the grape and to make wine; but being ignorant of the intoxicating quality of the liquor, or else being old, and unable to bear its strength, he became drunk, and lay uncovered in his tent, fast asleep. Canaan, the younger son of Ham, first discovered his grandfather in this indecent posture, and, having made himself merry with the spectacle, went and brought Ham thither, who, instead of reproving his son as he ought to have done, exposed the old man's infirmity to his brothers Shem and Japheth. The infirmities of the greatest saints and most eminent patriarchs are carefully noted in the sacred history, to manifest that they were but men, and to show what evil consequences result from intemperance.



PALESTINE GRAPES – Natural Size.

This act of Noah produced a division in his family; for when Ham published it with ridicule, his brothers Shem and Japheth piously

took a garment, and going backward, that they might not witness their father's weakness, they decently covered him therewith. When the patriarch was made acquainted with the different behavior of his sons, he pronounced, in the spirit of prophecy, a curse upon Canaan, the son of Ham, and a blessing upon Shem and Japheth. "And he said, Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the LORD GOD of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. GOD shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." Gen. ix. 25, 26, 27.

These predictions were exactly fulfilled, for the Canaanites became subject to the Hebrews, who descended from Shem, while the respective descendants of Shem and Japheth lived together in harmony and peace. Shameful as the conduct of Noah was, considering his character and his age, yet that of Ham deserved the severest censure. If we are bound to hide the failings of another, how much more are we called upon to draw a veil over the errors of our relations, and especially of those persons from whom we derive our existence? It is abominably unnatural to trifle with the imperfections of our parents, and to bring the odium of mankind upon their gray hairs. The conduct of Ham is an awful lesson to youth, and ought to convince them that filial reverence is a duty immediately following that which they owe to their Maker, and in which if they fail they can never expect his favor, either for themselves or their children.

The modesty and tenderness of Shem and Japheth form a beautiful picture, which is a fine illustration of that powerful commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee." Exod. xx. 12.

Noah having attained the great age of nine hundred and fifty years gives up the ghost, not far, in all probability, from the place where the ark rested after the flood. Having fulfilled his part, and measured his appointed time, the father of the new world must give place to others, and enter into that rest which remaineth for the people of GOD. He was saved from the devouring flood by an ark of divine construction, but he experienced another salvation infinitely more important, through faith in the atonement of a Mediator. Of that atonement the ark was but a type, or, according to the language of St. Peter, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward GOD) by the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST." Eph. iii. 21.

Awful as the contemplation of the deluge is, yet there is another revolution in prospect still more momentous and awful. There shall not, indeed, be an overwhelming flood of water upon the earth, but a stream of devouring fire, which will burn up all the works of nature and of art. A sudden destruction shall come upon the workers of iniquity, and as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be then: "They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark: and knew not until the flood came and took them all away: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matt. xxiv. 38, 39. Infidelity and immorality will prevail to an extraordinary height in the latter days; and though the prophetic signs will be clear and striking to considerate and religious minds, yet upon the generality of men they will have no effect. "Blessed are those servants, therefore, whom when the LORD cometh he shall find watching." When destruction shall come as a whirlwind, and vengeance shall be poured down from on high, they shall be safe, being sheltered in the ark of the divine mercy. Then cometh the judgment, when all the mysterious ways of Providence shall be cleared up, and every dispensation thereof be fully vindicated, to the confusion of the wicked and the glory and happiness of the righteous.

That solemn scene ended, and old things being done away, "all things shall become new." There shall be "new heavens and a new earth," in which righteousness only shall dwell. "Peace shall flourish in that happy state; mercy shall descend thereon as the dew, and righteousness spring out of the ground." No evil, either natural or moral, shall disfigure it, for "all shall know and obey the LORD, from the least to the greatest." The inhabitants of that world shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth in trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD [or of the MESSIAH] and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, saith the LORD, "that before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together; and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall

THE WOLF.

be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD." Isa. lxv. 17, &c.

What a glorious prospect is here expanded to the view of the Christian! Is he apt to look back with a kind of regret upon a paradise lost, through the weakness of our first parents? He turns with rapture to contemplate a paradise before him infinitely more glorious, in which is the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of GOD and of the Lamb. "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, there is the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, and yielding her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of GOD and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the LORD GOD giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. xxii. 2, 3, 4, 5.

If the Christian looks back upon a world destroyed by water, and sees the ark preserving Noah and his family, with the various living creatures necessary to stock the new world, he admires the wonderful goodness of GOD blending itself with his judgments, and on viewing in prospect the last dreadful destruction of the earth, he rejoices that there is a salvation appointed for all who shall flee from the wrath to come, and also an inheritance reserved for them which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

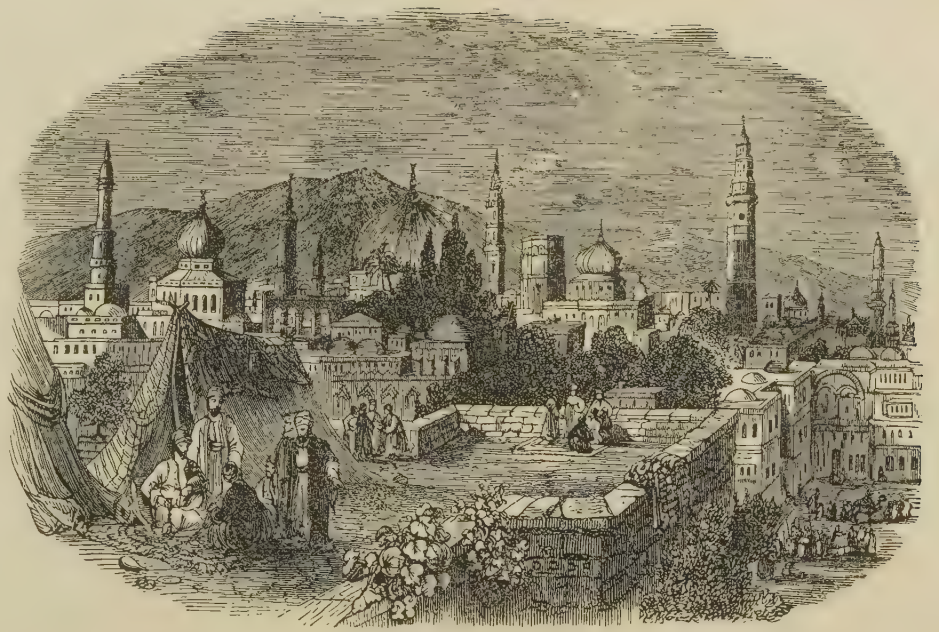
The covenant made with Noah is typical of that made with CHRIST for the preservation of his church: "For this is as the waters of Noah unto me, saith the LORD; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee." Isa. liv. 9, 10.

It is an unspeakable blessing to be interested in this divine and precious promise—to be included in that covenant of grace to which it is given. Many, however, are professedly baptized into communion with CHRIST'S spiritual body, who have never been renewed in the disposition of their minds. A mere outward profession of Christianity, and attaching ourselves to some branch of the Christian church, gives no man a claim to the promise, but will rather serve to add to his condemnation in the world to come. There was an unrighteous, idolatrous Ham in the ark, who inherited a curse

instead of a blessing; and the same will be the case with respect to many now in the visible church of JESUS CHRIST. In her communion, it is to be feared, there are numbers who are not united to the HEAD by a true and living faith, who marvel much at the declaration of TRUTH itself, "YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN," (John iii. 7,)—who know nothing of real religion, are destitute of all pious feeling, and who, when tried in the balances of the sanctuary, will be found wanting. Nothing short of "BEING BORN OF THE SPIRIT," can make us heirs of the promise, children of GOD, and consequently inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.

Let it be, therefore, our serious care and concern not to have "the form of godliness" merely, but the "power of it also," (2 Tim. iii. 5,) in our hearts, and manifested in our lives and conversations. Noah walked with GOD in this manner, and had that *rest*, both here and hereafter, which his name implied; and hereby we also must live in all holy obedience, in the midst of "a dark and corrupt generation, as lights of the world," (Phil. ii. 15,) if we would enter into that rest "which remaineth for the people of GOD." Heb. iv. 9.

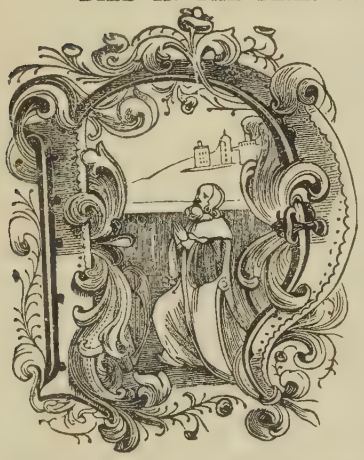
THE DOVE.



Ur of the Chaldees.

ABRAHAM.

DIED IN THE YEAR OF THE WORLD 2184 AGED 175.



NOT one of the various memoirs scattered throughout the sacred history, is more richly varied with interesting circumstances, or more instructive in all points, that of JESUS CHRIST excepted, than the account of Abraham. This illustrious patriarch stands eminently distinguished as an example of unshaken confidence in, and uniform obedience to, the ALMIGHTY. For this he is called "the Father of the Faithful," (Rom. iv. 11,) and the "Friend of GOD;" (James ii. 3;) distinctions so exalted, that nothing can be put in competition with them.

He was the son of Terah, and the tenth from Noah, so that, as there were ten generations from the creation to the flood, there were likewise ten from the flood to Abraham. Though he was younger than Nahor and Haran, his brethren, yet the sacred historian places him before them, as having justly gained the pre-eminence by his virtues. He was born at Ur of the Chaldees, a city lying between Nineveh and Nisibis, in the country of Mesopotamia, in the year of the world 2009.

NINEVEH, OR THE PRESENT MONSUL.

Chaldea was at that time overrun with idolatry and superstition, as it continued to be for many ages afterward. The prevailing worship there was the celestial host, consisting of the sun, the moon, and the stars, to which a divine influence was attributed: and hence the vain science of astrology took its origin among the Chaldeans.

Abram, for such was the name of the patriarch till it was altered by divine appointment, resided in his native country with his father Teran seventy-five years, and then left it, in obedience to the divine commandment. The Jews relate, that Abram inveighed with so much zeal against the idolatrous custom of his countrymen in worshipping fire, that he was thrown into a burning fiery furnace, whence he escaped unhurt. Let this be as it may, the character of Abram was so acceptable to the ALMIGHTY, that in the year of the world 2083 he appeared unto him in a gracious manner, and commanded him to depart from his country, and from his kindred, and from his father's house, to dwell in a strange land. Abram having communicated the heavenly mandate to his father Terah, the good old man, relying upon the piety of his son, determined to quit his native land, and with alacrity yielded to the sacred monition. "And he took Abram, his son, and Lot, the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai, his daughter-in-law, Abram's wife, and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan: and they came to Haran and dwelt there." Gen. xi. 31.

Though Nahor, the other son of Terah, is not mentioned in this place, yet there can be no doubt but that he also went out of Chaldea with the rest of his family, for his posterity is noticed as afterward being settled in Haran, and his grand-daughter Rebekah was married to Isaac, which is a proof that he had renounced idolatry. Thus Abram proved the blessed instrument of converting his father and the whole family; an encouragement this to every pious child to persevere in the cause of righteousness, in spite of all opposition; for how does he know what effects may result from his example, and what benefits he may render to his unbelieving friends through the good providence of GOD?

FENCED CITY.

The age and infirmities of Terah would not admit of a very long and tedious journey, and therefore his dutiful children, in tender care and concern for him, built a city, to which they gave the name of Haran, or Charran, in commemoration of their brother. Here Terah died, at the great age of two hundred and five years, being the oldest of the postdiluvians except Job.

The ALMIGHTY, who had great designs with respect to Abram, suffered him to remain with his family till the death of Terah, but then he commanded him to depart thence, and to go into the land of Canaan. "And he said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Gen. xii. 1, 2. 3.

It required no ordinary degree of faith to obey this commandment, which was accompanied only by the promise of a blessing very remote and obscure. Flesh and blood naturally seek present ease and comfort. Where can a man experience satisfaction, or be blessed in a long train of descendants, so well as by being settled in the midst of his friends and relations? Natural reason would be apt to question whether the call was not a delusion, since it enforced such hard conditions, and promised consequences so remote and improbable. It would likewise present to the mind the most formidable evils in the way of this enterprise. It would represent the length of the journey, the perils with which it must necessarily be attended, and the uncertain reception he would experience in a strange land. No doubt Abram had many dear relations in Haran, to part from whom, for ever, could not but be very distressing. His possessions also were considerable, and his habits and manner of life were in a great measure fixed, so as to render that country most suitable for him. But he receives a command to tear himself from all these tender ties and advantages. He must leave a fair inheritance, a pleasant estate, agreeable society, and affectionate relatives, to go

he knows not whither, exposed to dangers extremely formidable, in an advanced period of his life, and that upon a mere promise of a very distant good. He must go and seek a habitation among strangers, whose religion was opposite to his own, and who were divided among themselves into several tribes, often hostile to each other. All these, and many other difficulties, must have occurred to the mind of Abram, strengthened by every artifice of the great deceiver of mankind; but the faith of the patriarch was superior to all sense of danger and the suggestions of the tempter. He believed in the divine promise, and he considered the commandment of GOD as indispensable. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and he went out not knowing whither he went." Heb. xi. 8.

Faith in GOD must be implicit. When we are assured that the commandment is of divine authority, and when the path of duty is clearly and explicitly laid down before us, no worldly considerations, no enticements of friends, nor any regard to personal convenience must be suffered to keep us, even for a moment, from following it. He who takes GOD's word for his guide in life, will often meet with occasions to sacrifice present ease and advantage, rather than to deviate from the straight course which he has chosen. Father and mother, brethren and sisters, in short, every near and dear relation, will be as nothing in the sight of that man when they stand between him and his duty to GOD. Should they endeavor to impede his progress in holiness, or to divert him from the course he has adopted, he disregards them, being resolved to go to heaven alone, rather than miss the great prize of high calling which he has in view. We are all sojourners, like Abraham, being called from a dark and idolatrous world to go into a land of promise. Faith only can support us in this pilgrimage, and that will enable us to surmount every difficulty, to renounce every enjoyment, and to brave all opposition, and will at last bring us to the possession of that rest which remaineth for the people of GOD.

No sooner did Abram receive the divine command but he obeyed it. In mere worldly considerations, and in ordinary concerns of life, prudence may dictate delay, and the propriety of consulting friendly advice; but when the call is evidently from above, when the direction is clearly from GOD, to be dilatory is to be disobedient. Faith is prompt and even swift in compliance, rising at once to follow the command, and hastening, as it were, on eagles' wings to execute the will of the ALMIGHTY. "So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him, and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, and all the substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran, and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came." Gen. xxi. 4, 5.

This journey was above three hundred miles in length, and was rendered greatly embarrassing by dangerous deserts, high mountains, and thick forests; but all these difficulties were nothing to the intrepid mind of the patriarch, who, steady to his object, and firm in his reliance upon GOD, entered the land of promise, "and sojourned there as in a strange country." Heb. xi. 9.

On entering Canaan he pitched his tent in Shechem, and there he erected an altar unto the LORD. Here GOD appeared again unto Abram, and informed him that this was the land which his posterity should possess; a strange declaration to a man of his great age, but the patriarch "believed in GOD, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness"

TENTS.

Oriental Migration.

Abram did not continue long in Shechem, but removed his tent from place to place, erecting in every new situation an altar unto the LORD. Religion must be always in exercise, and no good can be expected in any change of circumstance where the direction of Heaven has not been sought, and in which the blessing of the ALMIGHTY is not supplicated. The patriarch increased in worldly possessions, notwithstanding his frequent removals, for the favor of the LORD accompanied him whithersoever he went.

But though the good man enjoys the blessing of Heaven, he is not exempted from trials. These he must partake with the rest of the world, for evil is the common lot of man. A grievous famine arose in the land of Canaan, which impelled Abram to seek an asylum in Egypt; but being apprehensive that the beauty of Sarai his wife would attract the notice and affections of the king, and that his life would in consequence be endangered, he thus advised her: "Say, I pray thee, that thou art my sister, that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee." Gen. xii. 13. The expedient was mean, and evinced a want of confidence in that power which had hitherto so signally preserved him; but Abram, it seems, took this journey without consulting the divine will; and he was suffered both to fall from his obedience, and to experience the folly of trusting to his own devices. As he feared, so it happened: Pharaoh, king of Egypt, hearing of the beauty of the stranger's sister, caused her to be brought to his palace. The situation of Abram must have been very distressing, even amidst the distinctions and presents which, as the brother of Sarai, were bestowed upon him. To be robbed of his beloved partner for ever in a strange land, and to reflect that she was in the possession of another, could not but produce the most agonizing sensations in his mind. But the ALMIGHTY still watched over his servant, and visited Pharaoh's house with such unusual plagues, that he consulted his priests and magicians on the occasion, who informed him (as Josephus relates) that it was for taking another man's wife, and that too of a stranger who had sought refuge in his dominions. The Egyptian king, shocked at the information, for a sense of virtue and hospitality prevailed among these people, though they were idolaters, "called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst thou, She is my sister? So I might have taken her unto me to wife? Now, therefore, behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way. And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had."

WOMAN VEILED.

The conduct of the Egyptian monarch deserves our admiration. Possessed of absolute power, he might have retained the wife of Abram without any fear of opposition, or of rendering himself liable to censure. The man was a stranger, and an enemy to the religion of the country, consequently obnoxious to the priests; yet notwithstanding these pleas of excuse which a man in his station might have alleged for indulging his criminal passion, Pharaoh rejects them, and seems evidently to have viewed the crime of adultery with horror. His intention was to have married Sarai, but when he discovered that she was the wife of another, he restored her to him with sacred fidelity, bestowing on him, at the same time, considerable presents. The language of Pharaoh is keen, touching, and dignified. He remonstrates with the patriarch upon the danger into which his equivocation had like to have involved all parties, and Abram, affected probably with remorse and gratitude, was respectfully silent.

When the famine was over in the land of Canaan, the patriarch returned thither, abundantly increased in riches; but his heart was above being set upon earthly possessions. He measured his steps unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai, unto the place of the altar which he had made there at the first: and there Abram "called on the name of the LORD."

After a considerable absence from a favorite spot, how delightful is it to return thither again in peace and prosperity! The sight of familiar scenes, endeared to the heart by former joys and friendly intercourse, is peculiarly cheering, and gives renewed health, vigor, and even youth. The mind is busy in retracing former incidents, the eye is gratified in beholding what it was wont to admire in early life, and all the faculties seem to undergo a regeneration. But how much more pleasant and exhilarating is the contemplation of scenes where we have experienced eminent instances of providential kindness; where we have received tokens of the divine favor; where we have been blessed by sensible manifestations of divine love; and where we have held sweet intercourse with the GOD of our mercies. The psalmist felt this when he so pathetically breathed forth this pious exclamation: "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living GOD." Ps. lxxxiv. 2.

Such, no doubt, was the feeling of Abram as he journeyed on towards Bethel, the house of GOD, where he had received the confirmation of the divine promise, and had experienced the favor of GOD in the most eminent manner.

At length he descries the sacred spot, and presses forward with alacrity to the altar which he had erected before his exile. What a beautiful picture is here exhibited to our view! The venerable patriarch, surrounded by his relations and his domestics, stands before the holy altar, on which he offers a sacrifice of gratitude, and in the fervor of his heart calls upon the name of the LORD. He proclaims aloud his thanks to the GOD of heaven, the self-existent JEHOVAH, by whom he was called, and in whom he trusted.

The next circumstance in the life of Abram sets him before us in the most amiable light. Above the narrow policy which marks the character of too many persons who have young relations under their care, the patriarch treats his nephew Lot as an equal and a brother. The young man appears to have been an entire dependant upon the protection of his uncle; but the generous Abram does not place him, as many would have done, in the capacity of a domestic. He gives him an opportunity to set up a household for himself, and Lot partakes of the blessing which descended upon the family of Abram, increasing in flocks and herds. In a short time, however, this enlargement of their stock produced jealousies and dissensions; not, indeed, on the part of the uncle or nephew, but their servants. "There was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle." Gen. xiii. 7. Feuds among servants frequently disturb the tranquillity of their masters, and occasion differences between friends. Abram sagaciously saw that these jarring discords between his people and those of Lot would increase more and more, in proportion to the enlargement of their possessions; and that at last some unpleasant misunderstanding might thereby take place between him and his nephew. To prevent this, he prudently formed the resolution of separating from Lot; but in the most kind and generous manner proposed the matter to his nephew. "And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, *for we be brethren.* Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

No language can do justice to the noble conduct of Abram in this instance. Though Lot had acquired all his property under the protection and through the encouragement of his uncle, the venerable man readily gave to him the free choice of any part of the country around them to settle in, foregoing his own particular advantage, or any partiality which he himself might have to one spot more than another, in order to preserve a good understanding between them. He might with justice have asserted his own claim to the first choice; he might, from his age, from his authority, from his power, and from the obligations under which Lot lay to him, have selected that part of the land which was most pleasing or convenient to himself; but with a forbearance that was truly magnanimous, he renounced all such pretensions for the sake of peace. How different was the behavior of the patriarch from that of mankind in general! Men who bear the fairest characters, and are distinguished by being just, disinterested,

and even generous, are yet very unwilling to yield up a particle of their right, or a single iota of what they consider as their due to a neighbor, though the matter may be of no moment in itself, or advantage to them. Hence we see so many dissensions and fierce contests in the world at large, and in private families, all which might be easily prevented by a little yielding in the outset, and by a generous spirit of forbearance on the part of the elder claimant to the warm and inconsiderate pretensions of the younger competitor. Had Abram been of a tenacious, irascible temper, unbending, and rigidly just, he would have upbraided the conduct of Lot, who owed his all to him; he would have called him to an account for the obligations he was under; and he might, with the power he possessed, have deemed himself warranted in chastising the servants of his nephew; but he rejected every such measure, and calmly treated Lot as his equal and his brother. The elder yields to the younger, the powerful gives way to the weaker, and the uncle and guardian of Lot, instead of dictating to his nephew and ward, gives him the choice of all the land, promising to take what the other should leave.

The conduct of Abram was that of an enlightened mind; that of Lot was mercenary and ungrateful. No sooner did his uncle make him this generous offer, than he lifted up his eyes with inquisitive eagerness to choose that part of the country which was the most fertile and well watered. The generosity of Abram ought to have made an impression of gratitude upon his heart, and have produced correspondent expressions of disinterested acknowledgment by way of return. But we read not anything of the kind, only that Lot "lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other." Gen. xiii. 10, 11.

Lot had no regard to the convenience of his uncle, but was covetous to possess that part of the country which was the most desirable. Avarice in all is a mean, narrow, and ungrateful vice, but in young persons it is particularly odious, and indicates a sordid spirit, little calculated for noble ends. Lot never considered the moral character of the neighborhood in which he was desirous to dwell; but, provided worldly advantages were to be obtained there, he had no concern about the bad society with whom he must necessarily associate himself to obtain them. How careful ought young persons to be, at their outset in life, to choose proper situations, and to form good connexions! What are all the advantages of wealth, when purchased at the expense of a good conscience? How can a person who lives daily amidst corruption and wickedness, remain wholly uncontaminated by evil example, especially when the entrance into that sort of association has been the result of his own choice, without consulting the advice of friends, or praying for the protection of Heaven!

Lot suffered severely enough by his covetous and ungrateful choice, but Abram, by leaving the direction of his affairs in the hand of the LORD, experienced fresh blessings, and a renewal of the promise. When Lot was departed from him, "GOD said unto Abram, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art; northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it: for I will give it unto thee."

While Abram dwelt in peace, enjoying the favor of GOD in the plains of Mamre, Lot, by his situation, was exposed to all the horrors of war. Certain kings confederated against those of Sodom and Gomorrah, with their allies, and defeated them, after a hard battle, in the vale of Siddim. The victors then plundered the cities where Lot dwelt, and took him captive with all his household. When the news of his nephew's misfortune reached the ears of Abram, the good and compassionate old man forgot his indiscretion and ingratitude, and, alive only to his distress, determined to undertake his rescue. He arms his servants to the number of three hundred and eighteen, and calling in the assistance of his neighbors Auer, Eshcol, and Mamre, he hastens with all the ardor of a veteran soldier in quest of the marauders. Can we behold the venerable warrior with any other sentiment than that of the most elevated admiration? How noble and generous is his motive for this enterprise? No sordid avarice, no rapacious ambition, no love of ostentation, no desire of popular applause,

prompt him to the exercise of arms. He engages in war merely as the friend of the afflicted and the avenger of the oppressed. He feels the most compassionate tenderness for his brother's son, and his soul is full of energy to deliver him from the tyrant hand of the conqueror. Yet with what prudence and skill does he manage this important expedition! He rushes not hastily, like an untamed horse, into the battle, but disposes his forces with so much order, as to fall upon the enemy when off their guard, by which means he not only ensures an easy victory, but prevents them from slaying their prisoners; an expedient not unusual on such occasions.

Having recovered Lot and all the captives, together with the spoil, Abram returns in triumphant satisfaction. On the way he is met by the king of Sodom, who gratefully offers him the whole of the property taken from the enemy. But Abram, with a spirit of noble generosity unparalleled in history, refuses to accept a single article. His language, in reply to the offer of the king of Sodom, is most solemn and devout: "I have lifted up mine hand (says he) unto the LORD the most high GOD, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich: save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went out with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion." Gen. xiv. 22, 23, 24.

The stipulation on the behalf of his confederates was strictly just; for though Abram might properly yield his own right, he could not properly give up that of others. But before he made this generous concession, he gave a present to Melchisedek, king of Salem, even "the tithes of all." Gen. xiv. 20. Who this extraordinary personage was cannot be determined, as the Scripture account of him is brief and obscure. The Jews unanimously affirm that he was Shem, the son of Noah, while others think that he was the son of Peleg. The Scripture barely informs us that he was king of Salem, and priest of the most high GOD. It is certain that Abram treated him with the greatest veneration, and there can be no doubt but that a previous intimacy had subsisted between these two excellent men. The blessing which Melchisedek pronounced upon the patriarch is striking and dignified: "Blessed be Abram, of the most high GOD, possessor of heaven and earth. And blessed be the most high GOD, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand."

After thus bursting upon our view as the sun from behind a cloud, Melchisedek as suddenly retires, and we read no more of him, except in an allusion to his character as a type of the MESSIAH, both by David and St. Paul. The psalmist expressly declares that he represented the Savior: "The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent; thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek;" (Psa. cx. 4;) and the apostle quotes this passage to the same purpose, carrying on the parallel at a greater length. Heb. v. 6, and vii. 1, &c. Melchisedek was the priest of the most high GOD, so was CHRIST. His name in Hebrew signifies *king of righteousness*, which is also the distinguishing title of our Savior. He was king of Salem, that is, king of peace; which is also the express character of Christ, at whose birth peace was proclaimed from heaven, and whose dying bequest to his followers was peace. The pedigree of Melchisedek is not known, and who can declare the generation of the MESSIAH, whose goings forth have been from of old, even from everlasting? Melchisedek brought forth bread and wine to refresh Abram and his followers, at the delivery of which he pronounced a most solemn benediction. The Redeemer of the world instituted the sacrament of the LORD's Supper, consisting of bread and wine, as the symbols of his body and blood, for the support of his servants in their spiritual warfare, and he accompanies the same with a divine blessing.

We return again to Abram, who, soon after this transaction, was favored with another heavenly vision, in which the LORD said to him, "Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

To this gracious declaration the patriarch returned a complaint in these words: "LORD GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?" Abram had received promise upon promise of a numerous progeny that should inherit the land in which he dwelt. No appearance indicated the fulfilment of the promise, and he found both himself and his wife advancing still farther into old age. That he should have some occasional seasons of doubt and fear is not therefore to be wondered at; on the contrary, it is to be admired that his faith in the promise remained so firm and constant as it did. The ALMIGHTY, not

at all displeased at the complaint of his servant, repeated the promise again that he should have an heir, and Abram believed in the LORD, who counted it to him for righteousness. Still farther to encourage him, GOD entered into a solemn covenant with the patriarch in this manner: "He said unto him, Take me a heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle

SYRIAN GOAT.

dove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another; but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. And when the sun was going down a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and lo a horror of great darkness fell upon him."

The patriarch, having made his sacrifice according to the divine appointment early in the day, waited in humble expectation for the manifestation of the divine presence. He continued at the altar guarding the sacred victims till the setting in of the evening, waiting with patience till the presence of GOD should come, and watching with pious care that his offering might not be polluted. When the sun declined, the eye-lids of Abram grew heavy, and were pressed down by a supernatural impulse. He fell into a deep sleep, and a horror of great darkness came upon him. The visitations of the ALMIGHTY are always awful, even those of love and mercy; how tremendous must they be, therefore, when their end is to arraign, judge, and condemn the sinner! In this mysterious trance the ALMIGHTY revealed unto Abram the future history of his family for the space of four hundred years, their oppressed condition in Egypt, and their final settlement in the land where he then dwelt. At the same time the LORD declared unto Abram that "he should go to his fathers in peace, and be buried in a good old age." Gen. xv. 15.

But though the promise of an heir was thus repeated, and solemnly ratified by a covenant, yet the performance must be further delayed. The faith of the patriarch must undergo a longer trial, that it may come forth as pure gold out of the fire. Sarai, however, betrays her impatience, and abandoning all hopes of bearing children herself, she is desirous of adopting any means to procure an heir for her husband. For this purpose she proposes to him to take her handmaid Hagar as a subordinate or secondary wife, a measure not uncommon in those times, though in the case of Abram it was absolutely unlawful, as implying a distrust of GOD, and introducing a shameful practice into his family. Abram, however, complied with the advice of his wife, and the

event answered her wish. Hagar conceived, in consequence of which she became vain and impertinent, while Sarai, peevish and resentful, made a serious complaint to her husband. Abram, hurt at the conduct of Hagar, and stirred up by the importunity of Sarai, gave the servant up to the authority of her mistress, who exercised it with so much severity that the poor handmaid fled into the wilderness, with an intent, probably, of seeking her native country. She could not, however, in her condition, go far, but rested herself by a fountain of water in the way to Shur. Here the angel of the LORD appeared unto the fugitive, and exhorted her to return to her mistress, adding a cheering promise, that the child which she bore should be the father of many nations. Hagar accordingly went back, and was obedient unto Sarai, till in due time she brought forth a son to Abram, who gave him the same name which was mentioned by the angel in the wilderness: "Thou shalt call his name Ishmael, because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him, and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." Gen. xvi. 11, 12.

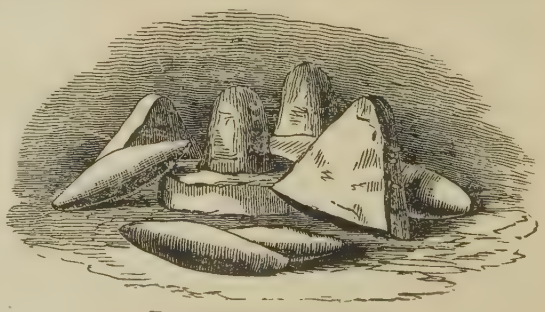
This elder son of Abram was the founder of the Arabian nation, and in every respect has the prediction been fulfilled, even to the character of that wonderful people in the present day, at the distance of three thousand years. The Arabs have been ever a wild and an unsettled people, roving about their extensive deserts as suits their convenience; always opposed to, and at enmity with surrounding nations, yet never losing their independence. Neither the conquering Mede, the Grecian, nor the Roman, were ever able to subdue these hardy sons of the desert. In vain have the Turks essayed to bring them into subjection, though professing the same religion with themselves. They still remain the uncontrolled masters of their native wilds, "their hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against them: and they dwell in the presence of all their brethren."

For some years after the birth of Ishmael, which was in the year of the world 2094 no particulars occur in the life of Abram. The next circumstance recorded of the patriarch is of great importance, being the prelude to the fulfilment of that promise on which he had built his faith for so long a period. When he was ninety years old and nine, another manifestation of the divine promise was made unto him, the covenant was renewed, the promise confirmed, and by way of ratifying it in the most solemn manner, the rite of circumcision was instituted. On this great occasion his name was altered from Abram unto Abraham, which signifies "the father of many nations.' The patriarch still retained his faith unshaken, and notwithstanding the strangeness of the command, and the painfulness of the operation, he submitted with readiness, and was circumcised, "he and all the males of his house, as GOD had said unto him."

Circumcision is still retained by the posterity of Abraham, both in the line of Ishmael and of Isaac, by which they are distinguished from other nations, and are consequently kept as standing monuments of the truth of divine revelation.

At this time the name of Sarai was changed to Sarah, signifying a great princess, and Abraham was promised a son by her, of whom the MESSIAH should come, or, in the language of holy writ, "in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed.'

The next incident in the life of the patriarch presents a beautiful picture of ancient times, when refinement and luxury had not contaminated the manners of men, and affected politeness had not superseded genuine hospitality. In the heat of a summer's day, as Abraham sat in the door of his tent,* three persons, apparently wayfaring men, drew in sight, on which the good man eagerly ran towards them, notwithstanding his age, and earnestly entreated them to partake of some refreshment. The



FORMS OF EGYPTIAN CAKES.

* It is common for those who lead a pastoral life in the East, to place themselves at the door of the tent, both to enjoy the fresh air and to enable them to keep an eye on the flocks and cattle

Arab Robbers.

strangers readily accepted the invitation, and seated themselves beneath the spreading branches of a tree, while Abraham busied himself in providing a suitable repast for them. "He hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf, tender and good, and gave it unto a young man, and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat." Gen. xviii. 6.

These persons were certainly unknown to Abraham; he was ignorant of their quality, their country, and their destination; yet his behavior to them was as respectful as if they had been attended by a pompous retinue, or had sent a messenger to him beforehand announcing their names, and their intention of paying him a visit. Abraham attended only to the circumstance before him. He beheld three sojourners oppressed with heat, and knew that refreshment and rest were, to persons of that description,

which feed around them. Shaw says, in speaking of the Bedouin Arabs, "The Bedouins, as their great ancestors the Arabians did before them, (Is. xxiii. 20,) live in tents, called *hhymas*, from the shelter which they afford the inhabitants, and *beet al shaar*, that is, *houses of hair*, from the materials, or webs of goats' hair, whereof they are made. They are the very same which the ancients called mapalia, and were then, as they are to this day, secured from the weather by a covering only of such hair-cloth as our coal-sacks are made of. Hence Virgil's describing them as having 'rara tecta,' thin roofs. Nothing certainly can afford a more delightful prospect than a large extensive plain covered with verdure, and having a number of those moveable habitations pitched in circles upon them. When we find any number of these tents together, they constitute a *douwar*. The fashion of each tent is of an oblong figure, not unlike the bottom of a ship turned upside down. They differ in bigness, according to the number of people who live in them, and are accordingly supported, some with one pillar, others with two or three, while a curtain or carpet let down upon occasion from each of these divisions turns the whole into so many separate apartments. These tents are kept firm and steady by bracing down their eaves with cords, tied to hooked wooden pins, well pointed, which they drive into the ground with a mallet; one of these pins answering to the nail, as the mallet does to the hammer, which Jael used in fastening to the ground the temples of Sisera, (Judges iv. 21.) The pillars are straight poles, eight or ten feet high, and three or four inches in thickness, serving not only to support the tent itself, but being full of hooks fixed there for the purpose, the Arabs hang upon them their clothes, baskets, saddles, and accoutrements of war. Holofernes, as we read in Judith xiii. 16, made the like use of the pillar of his tent, by hanging his falchion upon it, where it is called the pillar of the bed, from the custom, perhaps, that has always prevailed in these countries, of having the upper end of the carpet, mattress, or whatever else they lie upon, turned from the skirts of the tent towards the centre of it. But the canopy, as we render it, verse 9, should, I presume, be rather called the gnat or mosquito net, which is a close curtain of gauze or fine linen, used all over the East by people of better fashion to keep out the flies. But the Arabs have nothing of this kind, who, in taking their rest, lie stretched out upon the ground without bed, mattress, or pillow, wrapping themselves up only in their hykes, and lying, as they find room, upon a mat or carpet in the middle or in the corner of the tent.

Réné Caillie thus describes the tent of King Lam Khaté, whom he visited on his way to Timbuctoo: "The King's tent differs in nothing from those of his subjects; it is twenty feet long and ten wide, and covered, like all the others, with a stuff made of sheep's hair; at each end are eight leather straps, and as many stakes, upon which it is stretched. Two upright poles, ten or twelve feet long, crossing at top, and fitting into a cross-piece a foot long and six inches wide, are placed in the centre to raise it. This cross-piece rises above the upright, and prevents their ends from piercing the awning. A carpet of sheep's hair manufactured in the country surrounds the interior of the tent; four stakes are driven in at one end, supporting two cross-bars, over which a cord or string is passed in the form of a net, and upon this is placed their baggage. Their things are stowed in square leather sacks, shaped like portmanteaus, with an opening at the end; and these bags have a lid secured by a padlock. The harness of the horses and camels hangs up round the tent. The king's bed is after the same fashion as that of the negroes, consisting of a hurdle covered with mats, and raised by stakes and cross-bars about a foot from the ground. A mat spread on the ground covers the unoccupied part of the tent, and serves the king's attendants for a bed. The common people lie on the ground on mats, under which they sometimes spread a little straw. A matting is put round the goods at the end of the tent, to preserve them from thieves. The store of water is kept in skins upon stakes in the inside of the tents; it is reserved for the masters and the calves, and refused to the slaves; and even she who has the trouble to fetch it cannot obtain a little but by dint of entreaties, and after enduring all sorts of mortifications." Caillie afterwards adds: "The king's table-service consists of six or eight deep round wooden dishes, each containing about three quarts, and used to hold milk and other articles; three metal pots and two of earthenware, which they obtain from the fouta, form the cooking-apparatus, and complete the list of the furniture. This description will serve for all other tents as well as the king's, except that the poorer class have mats instead of a carpet."

Buckingham says of his journey from Aleppo to the Euphrates, and of his visit to Sheikh Ramadan, "When we alighted at his tent-door, our horses were taken from us by his son, a young man well dressed in a scarlet cloth benish, and a shawl of silk for a turban. The Sheikh, his father, was sitting beneath the awning in front of the tent itself. The tent occupied a space

BEDOUIN ENCAMPMENT.

peculiarly acceptable. With a friendly and open heart, therefore, he hastened toward them, and pressed their acceptance of what his tents could afford. His conduct at table was also highly respectful; he stood beside them under the tree, ready to see that they wanted for nothing, and to furnish whatsoever might be necessary. What a lovely and instructive picture is this, and with what propriety did the apostle adduce this circumstance as an encouragement to a like practice: "be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Heb. xiii. 2. This ignorance of their rank and errand rendered the behavior of Abraham meritorious, because no interest could have acted as a motive upon his mind to the exercise of hospitality.

The principal of the three, while they sat at table, addressed himself unto Abraham, and asked for his wife, and being answered that she was in the tent, he assumed his high character, and said, "I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of

of about thirty feet square, and was formed by one large awning supported by twenty-four small poles, in four rows of six each, the ends of the awning being drawn out by cords fastened to pegs in the ground. Each of these poles giving a pointed form to the part of the awning which it supported, the outside looked like a number of umbrella-tops, or small Chinese spires. The half of this square was open in front, and at the sides, having two rows of poles clear, and the third was closed by a reeded partition, behind which was the apartment for the females. It thus gave a perfect outline of the most ancient temples; and as these tents were certainly still more ancient as dwellings of men, if not as places of worship to gods, than any buildings of stone, it struck me forcibly on the spot as a probable model from which the first architectural works of these countries were taken. We had here an open portico of an oblong form, with two rows of columns of six each in front, and the third engaged in the wall that enclosed the body of the tent all around; the first corresponding to the porticoes of temples; and the last, as well in its design as in the sacredness of its appropriation, to the sanctuaries of the most remote antiquity.

"While we were talking of the Turcomans, who had alarmed us on our way, a meal was prepared within; and soon afterwards warm cakes baked on the hearth, cream, honey, dried raisins, butter, lebben, and wheat boiled in milk, were served to the company. Neither the Sheikh himself nor any of his family partook with us, but stood around to wait upon their guests.

"If there could be traced a resemblance between the form of this tent and that of the most ancient buildings of which we have any knowledge, our reception there no less exactly corresponded to the picture of the most ancient manners of which we have any detail. When the three angels appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, he was sitting in the tent-door in the heat of the day. 'And when he saw them he ran to meet them from the tent-door, and bowed himself towards the ground; and Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And he took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them, and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat,' (Gen. xviii. 2, 6, 8.) The angels are represented as merely passengers on their journey like ourselves; for the rites of hospitality were shown to them before they had made their mission known; so that the duty of hospitality to strangers seems to have been as well and as mutually understood in the earliest days as it is in the same country at present.

"The form of Abraham's tent, as thus described, seems to have been exactly like the one in which we sit; for in both there was a shaded open front, in which he could sit in the heat of the day, and yet be seen from afar off; and the apartment of the females, where Sarah was when he stated her to be within the tent, was immediately behind this, wherein she prepared the meal for the guests, and whence she listened to their prophetic declaration.

"I have noted these points of resemblance, chiefly because the tents of the Turcomans here are different from all those of the Arabs that I have ever seen in the countries of the south; these latter being of an oblong form, and divided in the middle, so as to form two compartments by the side of each other, both of them open in front, and closed at the back and sides, but without either a shaded porch or door before them, or an apartment of any kind behind."

Forbes, in his "Oriental Memoirs," says, "Hospitality to travellers prevails throughout Guzerat: a person of any consideration, passing through the province, is presented at the entrance of a village with fruit, milk, butter, fire-wood, and earthen pots for cookery; the women and children offer him wreaths of flowers. Small bowers are constructed on convenient spots, at a distance from a well or lake, where a person is maintained by the nearest villages to take care of the water-jars, and supply all travellers gratis. There are particular villages where the inhabitants compel all travellers to accept of one day's provisions; whether they may be many or few, rich or poor, European or native, they must not refuse the offered bounty.

'The modern Arabians also practise the same hospitality as Abraham and the ancient patriarchs. A party travelling in Arabia halted to dine under a tree at the entrance of a village, the Sheikh sent them eggs, butter, curds, honey, olives, and fruit. Where they passed the night they were supplied with poultry, sheep, or lambs, according to their number, sometimes alive, oftener dressed, in pilaus, stews, kabob, or kabab, which is meat cut into small pieces, and placed on thin skewers alternately between slices of onion and green ginger, seasoned with pepper, salt, and kian, fried in ghee, or clarified butter, to be ate with rice and dholl, a sort of split pea boiled with the rice. This is a savory dish, generally liked by the English, of which I often partook with my Arabs; and sometimes, as a great delicacy, they roast a lamb or kid whole, stuffed with almonds, raisins, and spices, or pistachio-nuts only, highly seasoned."

life, and lo! Sarah thy wife shall have a son." Sarah, who, though she kept herself concealed from view, could not withhold her curiosity, listened to this conversation from the tent door, which was behind them, and on hearing this promise of a child, her incredulity produced a contemptuous laugh. She thought herself secure from observation, but OMNISCIENCE marked not only the outward gesture, but the sentiment which excited it, and the LORD said unto Abraham, "Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is anything too hard for the LORD?" The woman, hurt at being discovered, had the folly to deny the fact, saying, "I laughed not;" though she ought to have known that He who exposed her could not but be divine. The LORD gravely answered, "Nay, but thou didst laugh," and then left her to the reproof of her own conscience, for it is added, that on being discovered "she was afraid."

These extraordinary personages having risen from table went toward Sodom, and their venerable host accompanied them part of the way. He who bore the chief rank, and is eminently in other places styled the angel of the LORD and JEHOVAH, communicated unto Abraham his design of destroying the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, on account of their sin, which was very grievous. While the other two went thither to execute the divine vengeance, this celestial being, or Deity in human form, stood and communed with Abraham, who, being filled with compassion for his fellow-creatures, and no doubt having in his mind the situation of his nephew Lot with his family, drew near, seemingly with an eager yet fearful anxiety, to plead with JEHOVAH on behalf of the devoted cities. The LORD attended compassionately to the importunity of his servant, who put this question to him: "Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city; wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The LORD graciously condescended to accept the mediation of Abraham, and promised that if he found that number in Sodom he would spare the whole for their sakes. Abraham, encouraged by the goodness of the LORD, proceeded to bring the number by degrees down as low as ten, and he said, "I will not destroy it for ten's sake." Here the patriarch stopped, probably awed by the consideration that he had ventured as far as sinful man should do in pleading with the ALMIGHTY; and "when the LORD had ceased to commune with Abraham, he went his way, and Abraham returned unto his own place."

In the mean time the other angels advanced toward Sodom, where they arrived in the evening, and Lot on seeing them exercised toward them the same kind of hospitality which they had experienced from his uncle. But the men of Sodom, who were evil in the extreme, both old and young, beset the house, demanding of Lot to deliver up his guests. The good man regarded the rights of hospitality as too sacred to comply with their abominable demand; and his refusal provoked them to attempt violence to attain their end. In this exigence the angels drew Lot into the house, and smote the men that were at the door with blindness. The heavenly visiters then commanded Lot to hasten with his family directly from the city, which was devoted to instant destruction.

In the morning Lot departed with his wife and two daughters, and, by his intercession, the LORD spared the neighboring city of Zoar, and thither he escaped, but his wife, for looking back, contrary to the divine prohibition, was turned into a pillar of salt. When Lot was placed in safety, then came down the fierce wrath of Heaven in a deluge of fire upon the other cities of the plain; and they were wholly destroyed, with all that grew upon the ground. The expression of the sacred historian, that the "LORD remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow," implies, that it was to him that he owed his preservation; so valuable and important it is to be related to the righteous, such a connexion often proving the means of saving a soul. We have also here a proof that the forbearance of the ALMIGHTY is frequently extended toward a sinful nation on account of the righteous that are therein. His servants are as the salt of the earth who preserve the whole from destruction, and avert, by their prayers and intercessions, the vengeance of divine justice upon a guilty land.

But it is time to return to Abraham. After he had beheld the fearful overthrow of the cities of the plain, he withdrew from that unpleasant and unwholesome part of the country, and journeyed to the south-west of Canaan, between Kadesh and Shur,

near the wilderness, taking up his residence in Gerar, a country of the Philistines. Here he fell into the same error as he did in Egypt. Abimelech, king of the country fell in love with Sarah, and being informed that she was Abraham's sister, he sent for her to his palace. But she, who was now pregnant of the promised heir, was miraculously preserved by Heaven; and Abimelech, on discovering their real relationship, reproached Abraham for his deception, and restored his wife unto him with presents.

From this place he travelled farther to the south, and dwelt at Beer-sheba, whither he was followed by Abimelech, who entered into a solemn covenant with him, that the one should not molest or injure the other. This circumstance encouraged Abraham to settle at this place, and there he erected an altar, and planted a grove, as a solemn and retired place, in which he might worship the LORD.

At length the divine promise, which had been so long since made, and so often repeated, became fulfilled; and, in the year 2109, Sarah bare a son, who was circumcised on the eighth day, and called by his joyful father, according to the divine command, Isaac.

The feelings of Abraham and Sarah, on this pleasing event, cannot be described. Faith long tried received its due reward; and all the consequences predicted by the angel, and confirmed by the declaration of the ALMIGHTY, rushed upon the transported mind of Abraham, while Sarah dwelt upon the present enjoyment of a son in her old age, and the comforts she should receive from her Isaac. Abraham saw a long lineage descending from him, in which the MESSIAH should arise, who would save his people from their sins; Sarah's views were confined to the pleasure of rearing Isaac to manhood, and in receiving support from him in her old age.

On the day when Isaac was weaned Abraham made a splendid entertainment, thereby recognising him as his heir. This, in all probability, excited the envy of Hagar, who had considered, naturally enough, that, from the age of Abraham and Sarah, there was little chance of their having children. The birth of Isaac destroyed the pleasing expectation she had formed of Ishmael's inheriting his father's property, and therefore on this great festivity the discontented passion evinced itself, and Sarah discovered the son of her handmaid "mocking Isaac." This action roused the partial feelings of Sarah, and resentment excited other passions. She began to consider Ishmael as a dangerous companion for her son, and perhaps thought that his mother might prove a formidable rival. Instigated by these motives, she importuned, or rather compelled Abraham to banish Hagar and her son from his house. Her language is haughty and peremptory, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." Gen. xxi. 10. Abraham was greatly concerned at this demand, and he grieved for Ishmael, because he was his son. Like a pious man, however, he laid his domestic troubles before the LORD in fervent prayer, and consulted, as every one should do, the divine counsel in his exigency. The ALMIGHTY, having designs of his own to bring about with regard to both these extraordinary youths, directed Abraham to comply with the wish of his wife; and accordingly Hagar and Ishmael were dismissed from tents where they had so long dwelt in ease and plenty, to seek subsistence elsewhere. Hagar in the wilderness having consumed the trifling provisions which she brought with her, left her child under a shrub, and sat over against him, expecting nothing but death. The GOD of Abraham compassionating her case sent his angel to comfort her, with an assurance that the lad should be the father of a great nation, and, as she was famishing with thirst, he caused a well of water to spring forth, and both she and the lad revived. Here they fixed their abode, and, under the divine protection, Ishmael prospered, and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt. Thus

BOTTLES.—*Genesis* xxi. 14.

HAGAR SENT AWAY.

originated the Arabian tribes, who bear all the characteristics of their wild progenitor agreeably to the word of the LORD.

In the mean time Abraham was near being seriously embroiled with Abimelech, his neighbor, owing to the servants of the latter having taken violently a well of water from the patriarch. This circumstance was of great moment where water forms one of the most valuable and one of the scarcest articles of life. Abimelech, who had a great respect for Abraham, arising from a conviction that the favor of Heaven was eminently upon him, yielded up the point in dispute, and a solemn covenant was entered into between them, by which the right of Abraham to the well of Beer-sheba was confirmed.

WELLS.

We are now arrived at the most memorable circumstance in the life of this illustrious patriarch, and one which has employed the pens of commentators and the wit of infidels more than any other in the sacred history.

The LORD, after many reiterated declarations, and many solemn engagements, at length accomplished his promise; and Abraham had the delightful satisfaction of receiving an heir by his beloved wife. The child grew up to years of maturity, and by the sweetness of his manners solaced the hearts of his parents in their old age, and gave them an assurance that now, after all the trying vicissitudes they had experienced, nothing would intervene to disturb them till their course should be done, when, to add to their comfort, they would have a dutiful son to close their eyes in the hour of dissolution. How vain are our fondest expectations! and how little is there upon earth that can be called our own! In the midst of his tranquillity Abraham is put to another trial, more severe than any he had yet experienced. While he beheld his Isaac with fond delight, as the child of promise, and the father of many nations, he received this extraordinary command from GOD: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Gen. xxii.

How explicit and awfully affecting is the divine order! "Take thy son," would not be clear enough, but it must be "thine only son," even Isaac, thy darling child; he upon whom thy heart is fixed; the child of thy tenderest affections; even Isaac, whom

MOUNT MORIAH.

PHARAOH ENTREATING MOSES.

Page 162.

"thou lovest;" and what shall be done with him? Must he be abandoned to a wandering life, to the pitiless storm of a ruthless world, like Ishmael? That, indeed, would have been exquisitely distressing to such a heart as Abraham's; but what is this when compared to the demand of his life? Take him into a distant land with all the deliberation and attendance of a pleasant journey, and offer him for a burnt-offering. What must have been the sensations of Abraham in that moment! Did not his soul sink within him, and every faculty rush into confusion, when the dreadful sentence was pronounced by that voice, which had hitherto sounded nothing in his ears but promises and peace? No doubt Abraham felt, at that moment, all the sympathies of nature beyond measure; but there was one principle in him which was not to be overthrown. His tenderness as a man and a father could not get the better of his duty to GOD. He had been accustomed hitherto to comply implicitly with every command of Heaven, with every ordinance of JEHOVAH. Satisfied therefore that the present ordinance came from the same just and righteous authority which he had hitherto made it his practice to obey, he arose without so much as murmuring, or even expostulating with GOD, and did as he was directed.

The length of the journey was an aggravating circumstance in this trying scene, as hereby every revolting idea against obedience had leisure to operate, and the suggestions of infidelity, that the command was a deception, were by no means weak, when added to a reflection upon the terms of the promise and the solemnity of the covenant. "How are those things to be reconciled, and how can all that has been promised to me be fulfilled, now that my innocent, my beloved Isaac must be offered as a lamb upon the altar?" Such a doubt was natural, and that it worked upon the mind of the patriarch can hardly be questioned: but that faith which had hitherto supported him, and by which, as the apostle saith, "he believed even against hope," (Rom. iv. 18,) now braved even this sore trial. He relied upon the wisdom, the goodness, the veracity, and the holiness of JEHOVAH; and, therefore, as he had received Isaac from his hands by promise, he was determined to yield him back again at the divine command.

On their arrival at the mountain, Abraham alighted with his son, and, leaving the servants, they ascended together, Abraham bearing the instruments of death, and Isaac carrying the wood for the fatal pile. At this crisis, so painful and distressing, Isaac puts a question which could not but rouse every tender sentiment in the breast of Abraham. "And he said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son: and he said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering? And Abraham said, My son, GOD will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering: so they went both of them together."

SYRIAN SHEEP.

The language is inexpressibly simple and endearing, but the conclusion shows, in the strongest manner, the unshaken firmness of the holy patriarch, and the superior energy of his mind. His confidence in GOD was paramount to every other feeling; and though he did not at that time entertain a hope of being delivered from this painful task, yet his piety was as fervent as ever.

Many religious persons, when called upon to resign some darling object to the will of Heaven, are apt to be fretful, and even rebellious against the LORD; they think that their trial is peculiar, and that their lot is hard; let such persons contemplate the burden laid upon Abraham, and the conduct of the patriarch through the whole of this painful scene. "GOD," said he, "will provide." He little thought, at that moment, that he was speaking in the spirit of prophecy, but considered his beloved Isaac, whom he addressed, as the very lamb appointed for sacrifice.

And now the altar is erected, the wood is carefully laid in order, the patriarch pauses, and addresses a solemn prayer to the covenant God of his mercies. Isaac, though a young man, not less than twenty-five years of age, and probably older, readily submits

to be bound, and lies stretched upon the wood which he had carried himself. Abraham, faithful to his purpose, calls upon his God, and stretches forth his hand to plunge the deadly weapon into the throat of his son, the child of his old age, the heir of promise, his beloved Isaac. It is enough. The sacrifice is performed. Jehovah, who had watched every part of the scene, and every movement of his servant's soul, arrests his hand at the instant it is about to obey the command, and orders him to forbear: "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me."

What a joyful transition is this; and how transporting must have been the feelings both of father and son at the gracious interposition of Heaven! How eagerly does Abraham unbind his dutiful child, and with what rapture do they embrace each other in this more than resurrection from the dead! The patriarch prophesied truly, when he said that God would provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering; for just behind him appeared a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; "and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt-offering instead of his son." This, indeed, was a joyful sacrifice of thanksgiving, at which the devout feelings of the worshippers were exalted to the highest pitch.

Abraham and his son, having thus performed their duty to God the deliverer, descended the mountain, and returned home with hearts full of gladness, love, and faith.

Is it possible to contemplate this extraordinary and affecting narrative without seeing, in all its parts, a striking representation of the redemption wrought out by Jesus Christ? At that period, indeed, all was dark and awfully mysterious, even to angels; but He who does nothing in vain, and who gives no command without a gracious purpose, ordered this marvellous incident as a glowing type of that sacrifice which should, in after ages, be offered up for the sins of the world. Abraham was ready to yield up his Isaac, the child of promise, at the divine will; but "God himself so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16. Isaac carried the wood for the sacrifice to the summit of the mountain, and Jesus bore his cross to the top of Calvary, where he actually poured out his blood, as an atonement for guilt not his own. Isaac submitted without murmuring to the will of his father and of Heaven, and Jesus came of his own voluntary motion to execute what his Father directed, saying, "Lo! I come to do thy will, O my God." Ps. xl. 8; Heb. x. 9.

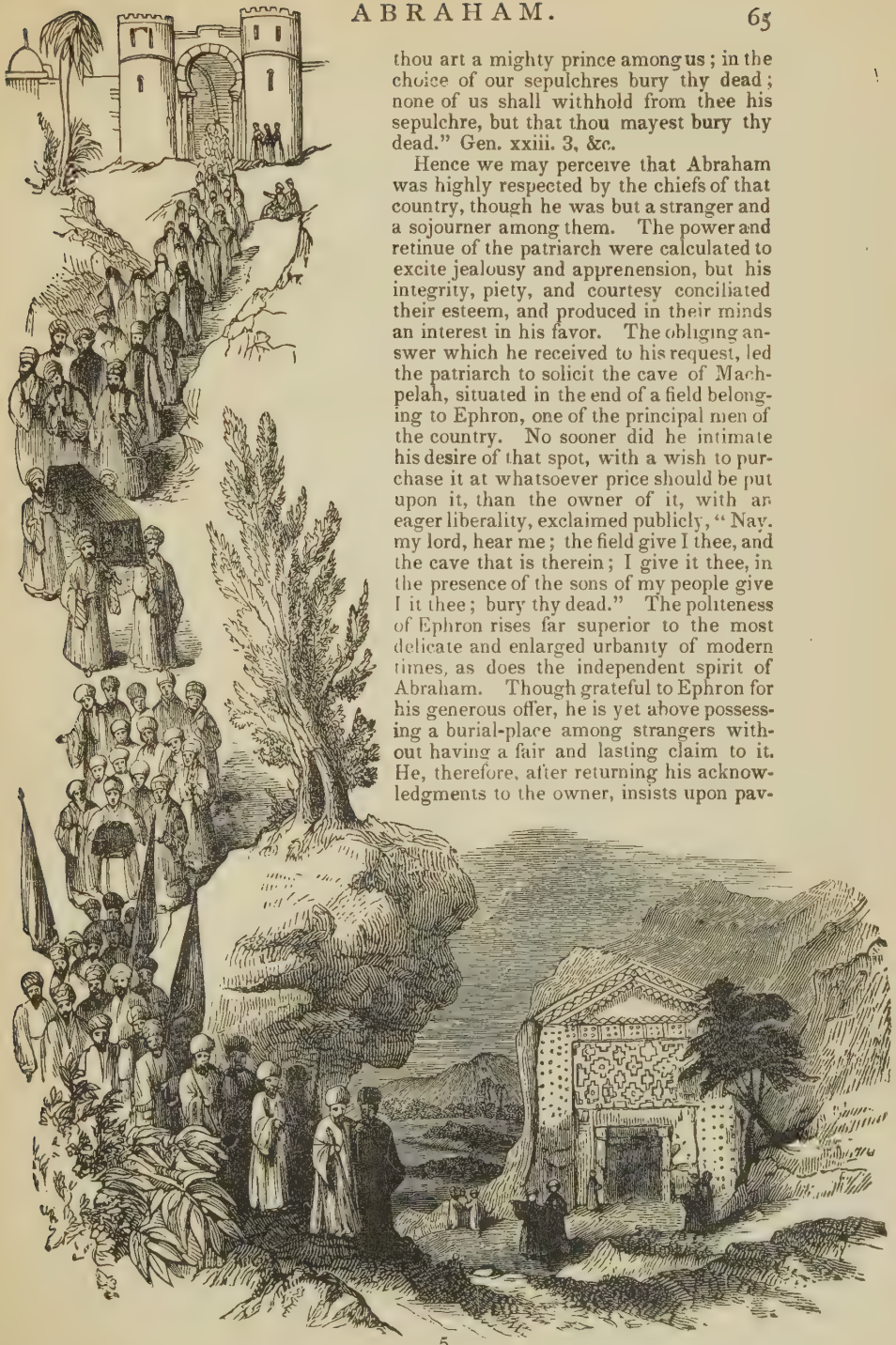
Let us then view the type and the antitype, Isaac and Jesus, with admiration and with gratitude to that God, who in the most mysterious way hath wrought out salvation for us. This should incite in our minds an abhorrence of everything which tends to oppose the will of God. From the readiness of Abraham to sacrifice his beloved child at the divine command, we are taught to resign ourselves, and all we have, to the disposal and direction of Heaven; above all, it calls us to cut off every beloved sin, every darling lust. Whatsoever is contrary to the law of God must be sacrificed, even though it should be as dear as Isaac was to his father, or as tender as the apple of the eye, if we would be spiritually "Abraham's children," and "inheritors of the promises of God."

A few years after this great event Sarah died in Kirjath-arba, at the advanced age of a hundred and twenty years. The loss was affecting, especially to such a tender partner as Abraham; but though he sorrowed, it was not as one without hope. Religion supported his mind in every trial; and Abraham knew that this was not his resting-place, for he looked for "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Heb. xi. 10. Thither he trusted his beloved Sarah was gone before him, and he knew that, in the course of things, it would not be many years before he should follow her.

With this view he now takes occasion to provide a burying-place for the dead in the country where he then dwelt; and the manner in which he procured it is an additional testimony of the noble disinterestedness of his mind.

Having called the heads of the country together, Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto them, saying, "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you; give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight. And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, Hear us, my lord;

BURIAL OF SARAH.—Page 64.



thou art a mighty prince among us; in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead." Gen. xxiii. 3, &c.

Hence we may perceive that Abraham was highly respected by the chiefs of that country, though he was but a stranger and a sojourner among them. The power and retinue of the patriarch were calculated to excite jealousy and apprenension, but his integrity, piety, and courtesy conciliated their esteem, and produced in their minds an interest in his favor. The obliging answer which he received to his request, led the patriarch to solicit the cave of Machpelah, situated in the end of a field belonging to Ephron, one of the principal men of the country. No sooner did he intimate his desire of that spot, with a wish to purchase it at whatsoever price should be put upon it, than the owner of it, with an eager liberality, exclaimed publicly, "Nay, my lord, hear me; the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein; I give it thee, in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee; bury thy dead." The politeness of Ephron rises far superior to the most delicate and enlarged urbanity of modern times, as does the independent spirit of Abraham. Though grateful to Ephron for his generous offer, he is yet above possessing a burial-place among strangers without having a fair and lasting claim to it. He, therefore, after returning his acknowledgments to the owner, insists upon pav-

ing for the field whatsoever price Ephron should fix upon it. The other, finding him tenacious of this point, says, "The land is worth four hundred shekels silver: what is that between me and thee? bury therefore thy dead. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron, and Abraham weighed unto Ephron the silver which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant."

EGYPTIAN RING MONEY.

This is the first instance we read of a purchase made with money; for it is evident from the passage that the silver was not common silver, but such as was current with the merchant. This shekel (according to Josephus) contained four Athenian drachms, or about half an ounce; so that these four hundred shekels seem to be somewhat more than two hundred and fifty dollars of our money, a sum very considerable in that early period of the world.

We not only learn from this the antiquity of money, but also that of making enclosures and sacred repositories for the dead. The inhabitants of the country had then family burying-places, and Abraham was desirous of having a cemetery for himself and those connected with him. It is a becoming and laudable practice, well suited to keep up a tender remembrance of our departed friends, a sense of our own mortality, and a lively hope of that solemn time when corruption shall put on incorruption, and when the grave shall yield up, at the command of OMNIPOTENCE, its sleeping inhabitants.

The pious Abraham, with a tender care for the peace and welfare of his son, now thought it expedient to procure for him a suitable wife, especially as the death of Sarah began to render a female necessary at the head of his household. Fearful lest Isaac might indiscreetly form a connexion among some of the heathenish families of Canaan, he gave a charge to his steward Eliezer, to go into Mesopotamia, and seek a wife for his son among his own relations. The faithful domestic accomplished this desirable purpose, and returned to his master, after a perilous journey, with Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel. The circumstances of this marriage, however, belong more properly to the history of Isaac, and therefore the particulars of it will be deferred till we come to the life of that patriarch. Having thus succeeded in uniting Isaac to his wish, Abraham himself took a wife, named Keturah, by whom he obtained six children who were the heads of populous tribes. Finding at length that the infirmities of age were gaining ground fast upon him, and that his dissolution could not be far off, he settled his worldly affairs, giving a portion to each of his other sons, and settling the bulk of his estate upon Isaac, as heir of the promise. This material point being settled, by which the peace of his family was secured, Abraham, no doubt, prepared for his great change, in a manner that became his pious character. That solemn event at last arrived, and he gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, at the age of one hundred threescore and fifteen. Gen. xxv. 8.

The remains of the venerable patriarch were, with the greatest solemnity and the sincerest concern, deposited by the side of his beloved Sarah, in the field of Machpelah, by his sons Isaac and Ishmael. From this circumstance it appears that the son of Hagar kept up a friendly intercourse with his brother, and had been on good terms with his pious father. At all events, it shows that the death of Abraham softened the wildness of his nature, and caused him to blend his tears with those of his brother Isaac, over their common parent. The picture is touching and instructive. Death, the great dissolver of all human relations, ought at least to be the means of reconciling those who remain behind. Why should brothers be disunited and envious to each other, when the time is hastening on that will consign them to the silent grave; and when the surviving party will feel, if not wholly lost to humanity, a sense of regret that any unbrotherly affection ever arose in his breast? Isaac and Ishmael, though once discordant, unite in sympathetic sorrow over the grave of Abraham. Let the lesson they afford be carefully learned by all who bear the fraternal character, to go and do likewise.

The character of Abraham is best seen by the actions recorded of him, and how brilliant does it appear! An unshaken confidence in the GOD who called him out of his native land, distinguished him through his pilgrimage state. "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD."

To that heavenly Canaan, or land of immortal rest, he arrived, after a long and honorable course here below. To be placed in his bosom is an expression made use of in the New Testament by the REDEEMER himself, and implies the consummation of felicity after a life of faith and trial. Luke xvi. 22. May we so pass through things temporal, as to obtain that glorious portion; and having finished the work given us to do with faith and diligence, be admitted "to sit down with Abraham in the kingdom of GOD!"

WELL WITH CAMELS. CANA.

ISAAC BLESSING JACOB. — Page 69.

ISAAC.

BORN IN THE YEAR OF THE WORLD, 2109; DIED, 2289.

THE private and sequestered life is often as instructive and as amiable as that which is passed upon the crowded theatre of the world. If we follow the good man into his retirement, and observe his conduct narrowly, we shall find much to admire and love, though it may not afford incidents to surprise and entertain us. The Scripture records present us with characters of both kinds, the public and the busy, the private and secluded; all, however, fulfilling the wise ordination of Providence, and all holding out to us the "example of a virtuous and godly life."

In the memoir of Abraham we have seen a great variety of interesting circumstances, and have viewed the great patriarch in a number of trying situations. The life of Isaac was less diversified; for he happily inherited from his father a large estate, and having the advantage of a pious education, he sat down in the quiet possession of it, without feeling the necessity or the inclination of roving about to increase his store, or to gratify a spirit of curiosity.

At his birth great joy took possession of the hearts of his parents, for he was the child of long expectation, therefore the name of Isaac was given him, which signifies *laughte.* or *gladness.*

In his youth he suffered much from the evil disposition of his brother Ishmael, who probably envied Isaac as the acknowledged heir of Abraham. The historian says that the son of Hagar "mocked Isaac," and St. Paul explains the matter clearly, thus: "He that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit." Gal. iv. 29. This accounts for the asperity of Sarah, and the peremptory demand which she made to Abraham, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." That there was something peculiarly provoking and offensive in the conduct of Ishmael there can be no doubt, otherwise Abraham would hardly have banished him from his presence in a time of joy and festivity.

The most prominent circumstance in the life of Isaac was the scene in Mount Moriah, where Abraham, obedient to the will of Heaven, was about to sacrifice him for a burnt-offering, and where Isaac, without murmuring, yielded himself a victim to be slain upon the altar. We have already described the particulars of that interesting and affecting event in the life of Abraham, and therefore shall forbear to add anything upon it in this place, except to express our admiration of the meekness of Isaac, and his dutiful submission to a mandate so repulsive to human nature. How finely does he represent the meek and submissive REDEEMER of the world, who, all-obedient to the will of his heavenly Father, bore the cruel mockings of his brethren the Jews, neard passively the sentence of death, carried his cross to Mount Calvary, and there actually endured the most agonizing pain and suffering, being offered as a sacrifice for us men, and for our salvation!

Isaac lived after this a domestic life with his pious and affectionate parents, being their joy and comfort in the decline of life, by the sweetness of his temper and the sincerity of his religion.

The attentions of such a son must have been delightfully gratifying to his aged mother, and her dying pillow was softened by the gentle hand of Isaac, who mourned over her remains with sincere affection.

This last duty performed, and the time of mourning expired, Abraham considered it necessary to provide a wife for his son. The good father had no thought of a splendid or wealthy alliance, but was anxious to obtain a daughter-in-law from a family which feared GOD: and Isaac, like a dutiful son, left the management of this important concern to the prudence of his father. Abraham, having weighed the matter fully, called for the steward of his household, and having bound him by a solemn oath, he sent him to Mesopotamia to seek a wife for Isaac from among the children of his brother Nahor. Abraham was fearful lest his son might, through inadvertence, form an improper connexion with some of the Canaanitish damsels, and, therefore, took this precaution to swear his steward to the due discharge of this commission. The faithful servant went as he was commanded, and, on his arrival at the place of his destination, he stopped at a well, that his camels might drink; and, while he rested there, he offered up an earnest prayer to "the GOD of his master Abraham, that he might have good speed that day." Gen. xxiv. 12. How diffusive is the influence of a good and gracious example! A pious master makes religion respected in his household, and often brings the domestics to know and love what they would otherwise be ignorant of and despise. This head servant of the patriarch has a most tender concern for the welfare of his master's household, and he shows that he has that at heart, not by an ostentatious display of service, or by a parade of zeal for his master's honor, but by a solicitous regard to promote his wishes, and by praying to GOD for success upon the commission with which he is intrusted. Praying masters will frequently make praying servants, and upon such families a divine blessing will descend.

The GOD of Abraham attends to the request of the pious steward, and the damsel allotted for Isaac comes out at evening to the very spot where the camels rested. Though the daughter of a man of wealth and rank, she is not above the domestic cares and concerns of the family. Rebekah, the niece of Abraham, and a person of eminent distinction, is seen "bearing a pitcher upon her shoulder," which she fills at the well. The circumstance is instructive, and shows that, in the primitive ages, nothing was considered mean which was laudable and useful. To draw and carry water may appear servile, and unbecoming in a female of high birth and expectations; but she who can thus descend to an employment necessary in a family, will be esteemed the more by the liberal and discerning. From this picture of primitive simplicity the female world are instructed in every age to attend minutely and actively to all the concerns of family economy.

CRUSE. Forms of the Egyptian vessel.

The diligence and humility of Rebekah were not more amiable than her courtesy and affability. Abraham's servant, as she ascended from the well, requested a draught of water from her pitcher, and Rebekah, with true politeness, said, "Drink, my lord, and she hasted to let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him to drink." Not content with gratifying this request, the damsel, in a spirit of true benevolence, attended to the wants of the poor camels also, and "she hasted and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well and drew water for all his camels." The sacred writer observes, that "the man wondered at her," and well he might. The winning courtesy of such behavior could not but affect any human heart with love and admiration. Graceful condescension and acts of kindness in persons of distinction will always have this effect upon persons in lower stations; and if those who move in the more elevated circles would but consider how endearing they make themselves by a courtesy of manners and pleasantness of demeanor, it would be their chief ambition to win a praise so easily obtained.

The stranger, charmed with the sweet behavior of Rebekah, felt a wish that she might prove a branch of his master's family; and when he found that she actually

WATER CARRIERS.

was, he "bowed down his head and worshipped the LORD. And he said, Blessed be the LORD GOD of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren."

It is delightful to see a man acknowledging the LORD in all his ways, seeking his direction in the outset, and blessing him for the issue. The conduct of this servant deserves to be admired and imitated by every one who believes in the superintending care of divine Providence. He takes no step without prayer, and he receives no favor without praise.

Rebekah, on hearing the devout ascription of the stranger, ran home to inform her family that a messenger from her uncle was at the well. Her brother Laban immediately hastened out, and said, "Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house and room for the camels."

THE CAMEL.

After the cattle were properly taken care of, refreshment was placed before the steward; but he, who had the interest of his master at heart before his own ease and convenience, would not eat till he had discharged his mission. How does the character of the good man rise in our esteem by every new circumstance in this beautiful narrative! He loved his master, because he knew and loved his master's GOD. Religion made him a faithful and affectionate servant; and Abraham, knowing his value, placed an entire confidence in him.

The family of Rebekah received the overture with willingness, but then they exercised no sort of authority over her inclinations. They called the damsel, and "said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go." The free and artless reply of Rebekah comported with the general manners of that age of simplicity, and is not to be judged after the customs of modern time, when the heart is taught to conceal its natural sentiments under an artificial guise.

Eliezer was impatient to report the success he had experienced to his venerable lord, and, therefore, resisted all the importunity of Rebekah's family to tarry with them for a little time. Finding him fixed in his determination, and having nothing to allege against the motive of it, they dismissed their fair relative with a blessing. "Thou art our sister; be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them."

Let us now turn our eye toward the tents of the patriarch in Canaan.

Isaac, we are told, "went out to meditate, or to pray in the field at even-tide." Gen. xxiv. 63. This devotional disposition formed a leading feature in the good man's character. The circumstance here noted, though apparently simple, affords abundant matter for interesting and instructive reflection. It was probably the custom of Isaac to withdraw from the crowded tents into the neighboring fields to indulge in religious contemplation and prayer. Rural retirement is admirably calculated to compose the mind, and to lead the thoughts into a serious channel. The stillness of the scene calms down every perturbed idea, and reduces into subjection the wildness of fancy. All nature shows sobriety, and tends to elevate the mind, which is not absolutely vitiated, to the universal Parent, whose "tender mercy is over all his works."

The "even-tide" is more peculiarly fitted to accomplish this purpose. When the glare of day is softened down into a mellow light, and the noise of labor and festivity subsides into stillness, the mind harmonizes with nature, and becomes susceptible of serious impressions and devout elevations. And when meditation has revolved past mercies, has combined difficulties with deliverances, fearful apprehensions with providential interpositions, it necessarily leads the soul to praise and prayer. Thanksgiving for blessings produces contrition for offences, and this brings the contemplative man to prayer for grace. In viewing Isaac, therefore, as he slowly paces the field, we have an example which it will be proper and profitable to imitate.

"Meditation here
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart
May give a useful lesson to the head,
And learning wiser grow without his books."—COWPER.

While the patriarch was exercised in religious contemplation, and perhaps the thoughts of the new situation he was about to enter into did not pass without a share of his thoughts, he lifted up his eyes, and beheld the camels which his father had sent to Mesopotamia.

Rebekah, on being informed that the pensive meditant in the field was no other than her spouse, alighted from her camel, "and took a veil and covered herself." No grace is so beautiful or attractive as female delicacy and reserve. We have seen the fair damsel's readiness to obey the call of Providence, and to follow the dictates of her heart, with admiration; and now that she approaches the presence of her lord, she distinguishes herself by a conduct no less amiable. Some forward maidens would have been eager not only to stare at the man, but to attract his notice also, by a haughty air of affectation. Rebekah puts on a veil to hide her blushes, and descends from the camel in a spirit of humility. And "Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

ORIENTAL VEILS.

Thus did the ALMIGHTY, whom he served, provide a remedy for grief, and reward the dutiful affection of Isaac by a suitable comfort.

But all earthly good is mixed, and accompanied with some circumstances that, by rendering faith and prayer indispensable, we may feel ourselves dependant always upon Providence. Rebekah, though beautiful, was barren. Isaac, therefore, "entreated the LORD for her, and she bare twins;" so gracious is Heaven, that it oftentimes rewards a patient continuance in well-doing by more than was solicited.

These sons, Esau and Jacob, however, occasioned much trouble to Isaac, and that owing to an evil which is but too common even in the present day, and ever will be so while human nature is the slave of passions. "Isaac," it is said, "loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison; but Rebekah loved Jacob." Gen. xxv. 28. Nothing can be weaker than parental distinctions among children; and usually the principles upon which these partialities are formed are ridiculous. This was the case here:

WOMEN AND CAMELS.

Isaac's fondness for Esau arose from a circumstance that one should least expect would have operated upon the mind of so good a man: "he loved him because he did eat of his venison." Esau was fond of the sports of the field; a diversion by no means unlawful, but seldom calculated to improve the mind, or to meliorate the heart. It hardens the faculties while it renders the limbs robust, and deadens the tender feelings while it gives health and agility. There were no qualities in Esau which warranted this partiality: on the contrary, he was resentful, ferocious, and irresolute. Rebekah, no less blameable, placed her affections upon Jacob, perhaps because he was the younger, more delicate, placid, and of a domestic turn.

An incident occurred which afterward tended to increase this dissension, and made the breach between the two brothers irreconcileable.

Esau, returning one day from the field, faint with the fatigues of the chase, and, according to the original phrase, nearly ready to die, requested a mess of pottage, which his brother Jacob was preparing for himself. The younger, taking advantage of his brother's condition, refused to give it him on any other terms than a transfer of the primogenitureship, and that too upon oath. Esau, regarding only his exigency, readily yielded the birthright, ate the pottage, revived, and went his way. Thus, says the sacred writer, "Esau despised his birth-right." Gen. xxv. 34. This certainly was a more serious and important matter than ordinary readers are apt to imagine; and the expression of St Paul, that "Esau was a profane person, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright," (Heb. xii. 16,) implies that the renunciation had something of apostacy in it.

The promise of the Messiah ran in the line of Isaac, and, therefore, the conduct of Esau shows that he treated it as a consideration of no value. He fell into infidelity and idolatry, through the indulgence of sensual desires, and the promise descended upon his brother Jacob, in whose family the true religion was preserved.

While the family peace of the patriarch was thus disturbed, a circumstance happened which often occurred in the land of Canaan. A famine arose, and Isaac was compelled to go in quest of bread to a distant country. It seems to have been his first intention to go down into Egypt, where his father had sought an asylum in a like case of distress; but the Lord appeared unto him, and warned him from taking that step, adding this promise in case of his obedience; "Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee and bless thee: for unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries; and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father. And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because that Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." Isaac obeyed the voice of the Lord, and dwelt in Gerar, the capital of Philistia. But here the patriarch fell into the same guilty weakness which Abraham committed at the same place. Fearing that the beauty of Rebekah would endanger his life, he answered the men of the place, when asked concerning her, "that she was his sister." The king, some time afterward, discovering that they were man and wife, sent for Isaac, and thus sharply reproved him: "What is this that thou hast done unto us? One of the people might lightly have lain with thy wife, and then thou shouldst have brought guiltiness upon us. And Abimelech charged all his people saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death." Gen. xxvi. 10, 11.

With what reverence did this heathen nation regard the marriage state, and in what abhorrence was the sin of adultery held among them! The king viewed the danger into which the equivocation of Isaac might have involved some one of his subjects, as a national concern. He dreaded that the wrath of Heaven would fall upon the country, in consequence of so atrocious an offence, and therefore denounces death upon the person who should dare to be guilty of it.

The favor of God eminently prospered Isaac in Philistia, "and he waxed so great in the possession of flocks and herds," that the Philistines envied him. This is the customary attendant on wealth. The men of the country could not view the prosperity of the stranger without discontent; and though his increase did not injure them, it yet excited their hatred. Minds under the influence of this base principle are capable of any mean action. Abraham, when he sojourned in this land, had digged many wells there, to which Isaac, it seems, laid a fair claim. These wells the envious

Philistines stopped up, and filled with earth, thus destroying the property of another without enriching themselves. Abimelech, perceiving the animosity which his people had against Isaac, and somewhat jealous himself of the patriarch's greatness, desired him to withdraw from the country: "Go from us, for thou art much mightier than we." Isaac accordingly quitted the place, and settled in the valley, where he digged again for the wells of his father; but the envious Philistines followed him from the city with their malice, and seized the property which had descended to him as an hereditary right. The patriarch, wearied out with their malignity, and not willing to resent the injury he had received, removed farther, and fixed his residence at Beersheba, where he built an altar for worship, and "called upon the name of the LORD."

While he resided here in peace, Abimelech, who had so ungenerously dismissed him from Gerar, paid him a visit, attended by the principal officers of his household. Isaac, surprised, and perhaps apprehensive that some evil design prompted this visit, thus accosted them: "Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?" The interrogatory was sharp, but just. The Philistine chiefs replied, that having seen him eminently the favorite of Heaven, they came merely out of esteem, and to enter into a covenant with him. Peace-loving Isaac readily consented to the proposal; and having entertained his guests liberally, "they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware one to another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace."

Thus the LORD softened the asperity of his enemies, and infused a fear of him into their minds. So superior is innate goodness, that even the ungodly have some sense of reverence for it, and are desirous to be on good terms with the righteous.

During a period of eighteen years from this event, we read of no circumstance to disturb the placid tenor of Isaac's life; but then the peace of it was greatly imbittered by the irreligious conduct of Esau, who, without advising with his parents, took two wives from among the Canaanites, which occasioned "a grief of mind," or, as it is termed in the Hebrew Bible, "bitterness of spirit unto Isaac and to Rebekah." The patriarch knew how fearful Abraham was lest he should form an idolatrous connexion, and therefore, animated by the same pious sentiment, he was desirous that his sons should follow his own example. But Esau, who, with his birthright had renounced all regard to true religion, gave way to unlawful desires, and took two wives at once into a family hitherto distinguished by a scrupulous adherence to the ordinances of JEHOVAH.

But though his eldest son had thus openly opposed the principles of religion, Isaac continued his partiality toward him, and was desirous that the peculiar blessing of the covenant should descend upon him, with all the privileges of the primogenitureship. Finding himself, therefore, bowed down with the infirmities of old age, and likely soon to end his pilgrimage, he called for Esau, his beloved son, and gave him a charge to procure some of his favorite venison, and to dress it, as he was wont to do, promising afterward to confer upon him his blessing. The motive of Isaac in this instance was very weak, and shows not only an unbecoming attachment to Esau, but one founded upon a sensual principle. His palate was pleased with the peculiar savoriness of Esau's venison, and on that account he overlooked his heinous departure from the pure principles of JEHOVAH. His marriage into heathenish families was forgotten, and the doating father resolved to give his blessing, not where Providence led, but where affection and indiscreet partiality inclined him. Rebekah, who had heard the orders and promise given by her husband, resolved to counteract his design, induced so to do by motives not at all better than those of Isaac. Full of love for her favorite son, she persuaded him to personate Esau; and having dressed such meat as she knew was agreeable to the old man, she put the skins of kids upon his hands, and clothed him with his brother's garments, and in that disguise caused him to present the meat unto Isaac. The patriarch, being nearly blind, could not discern the fraud that was put upon him, but having some mistrust through the quickness with which his son had discharged his commission, he felt the hands of Jacob, and finding that they were hairy, like those of his favorite, he said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. So he blessed him." After partaking of the meat he kissed his son, and pronounced a solemn blessing upon him in the spirit of prophecy, being under the influence of divine inspiration. Jacob had hardly quitted the chamber before Esau returned, and brought of the venison which he had dressed

ISAAC BLESSING JACOB.

according to his father's request. The old man, grieved and astonished at the circumstance, trembled; and Esau, on hearing of the deception, "cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, saying, Bless me, even me also, O my father!"

Isaac could not revoke the terms of the blessing which he had pronounced upon Jacob. He was sensible that the whole was of divine appointment, and therefore confirmed the promise in this strong manner: "I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed." The elder son, in language which one would imagine proceeded from a most tender spirit, exclaimed, "Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?" Isaac, who was desirous to bestow all that he could upon his first-born, without violating the direction of the ALMIGHTY, "answered and said unto him, Behold thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; and by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother: and it shall come to pass, when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck." Gen. xxvii. 1, &c.

This prophecy was exactly fulfilled; for in the time of David, the Edomites, who were the lineal descendants of Esau, fell under the Israelitish yoke, but in the days of Joram they shook it off, and regained their independence.

Esau was so exasperated against his brother for this fraud, that he formed the deadly design of assassinating him: but, as if he had some regard for the peace of his father, he resolved to put off his malicious intent till "the days of mourning for him should be ended." Rebekah, being informed of Esau's evil purpose, persuaded Isaac to send Jacob to her brother Laban, that he might take a wife from among his kindred; and, on dismissing him, the patriarch confirmed the benediction which he had before pronounced upon him.

Esau, provoked still more at this escape of Jacob, and at the conduct of his father towards him, plunged deeper into immorality and profaneness, taking, as it should seem, out of mere spite to Isaac, one of the daughters of Ishmael to wife.

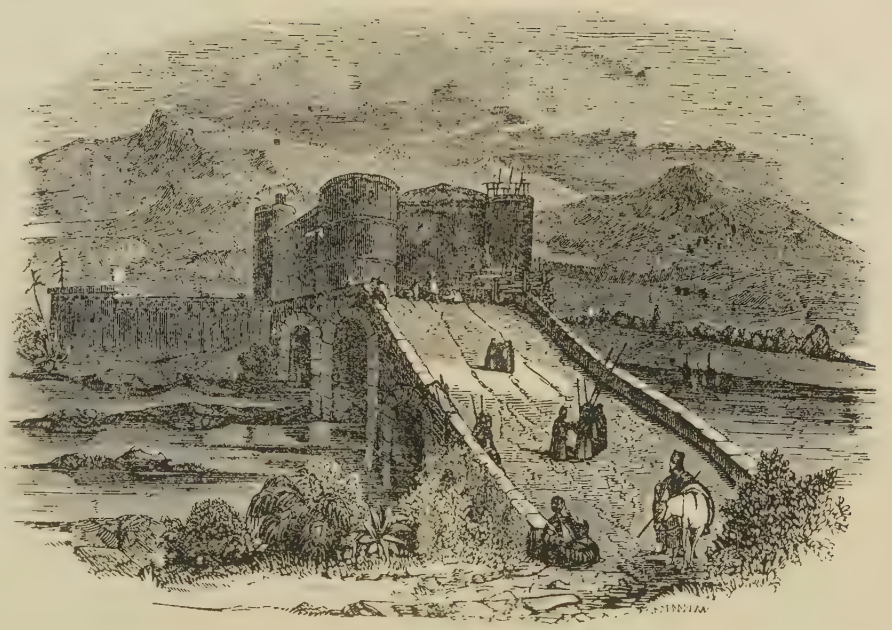
Thus was the foolish partiality of the patriarch requited by the apostacy and licentiousness of his first-born. How seldom do these fond distinctions answer the expectations of the parents, or bring credit upon the motives whence they arise! Isaac indulged Esau in pursuits which were little calculated to render him a good member of society, a dutiful child, or a pious servant of GOD, merely because he was fond of the venison which he procured. The hunter turned out in consequence a man of lawless passions, irreligious, and, finally, disobedient. The peace of the family was broken at a time when the two sons should have vied with each other in contributing to the ease and comfort of their parents, and the close of Isaac's life was imbittered by the exile of one child, and the profane conduct of the other.

But the designs and passions of men are overruled by the Providence of GOD, to bring to pass his own wise and gracious purposes. It was his will that the promise should run in the line of Jacob, and in the accomplishment of it he makes use even of the weakness of Isaac and the ambition of Rebekah. Yet we are not hence to conclude that the artifice made use of by her, or the falsehood uttered by Jacob, were lawful or pleasing in the sight of GOD. He loveth truth in the inward parts, and cannot endure a lie even in his own servants. But from the evil purposes of men he educes good, and from their wrath he draws matter which redounds to his glory.

When Isaac sent Jacob away to Padan-aram, to elude the vengeful design of his brother Esau, he had little or no expectation of seeing him any more. But though his younger son remained absent forty years, the ALMIGHTY prolonged the life of the patriarch, so that he had the satisfaction of embracing him again, and of hearing that Esau and Jacob had met and embraced each other by the way.

The life of Isaac during that space of forty years is passed over in silence; and doubtless it was not distinguished by any particular incident of moment, otherwise the sacred historian would have noticed it. But it was not passed without usefulness or enjoyment. His religious character forbids us to suppose that so good a man did not live during that time in the regular discharge of those duties which lay upon him as the head of a family, the heir of the promise, a patriarch, and a priest. In sweet communion with GOD he lived, and though no great variety of circumstances distinguished his life, yet his example affords a beautiful picture for imitation. His dutifulness to his parents holds out a charming lesson to young persons; his piety secured him the divine favor, and a peaceable enjoyment of the land of promise: and his love

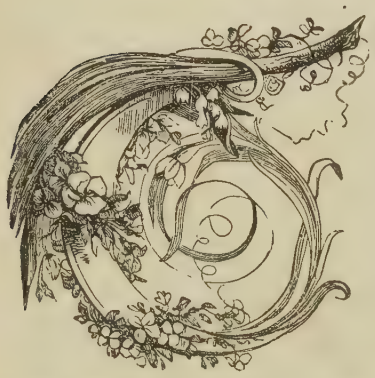
to his family was rewarded by seeing harmony restored after a sad breach, occasioned by his own injudicious partiality. The venerable saint, at the age of one hundred and fourscore, yielded up his spirit into the hands of the God of Abraham his father, and probably in the presence of his sons Esau and Jacob; for it is said that the two brothers united in paying the last solemn rites to their father.



JACOB'S BRIDGE.

JACOB.

BORN IN THE YEAR OF THE WORLD, **2169**; DIED, **2316**.



HERE is a striking variety in the characters and circumstances of the three illustrious fathers of the chosen people of GOD. In Abraham we have seen the man of powerful faith, generous, and intrepid. In Isaac we are led to admire the pensive, retired, and domestic character. His son Jacob presents himself to us with different qualities, and his life exhibits a number of striking incidents. Yet each of these pious men claims our veneration by an unshaken fidelity to GOD, by the example of virtuous life, by various prominent excellences of character, and by being the appointed means of preserving the great doctrines of religion, especially the promise of that MESSIAH, who was to descend from them according to the flesh, to restore the ruins of the fall.

Isaac and Rebekah had been married twenty years without having a child, a circumstance which gave them considerable concern, especially as they relied upon the promise of an extensive line of posterity. Yet for so long a period did the LORD choose to try the faith of the patriarch, as he had done that of his father. Isaac laid the case in prayer before GOD, and his prayer was more than answered: for Rebekah bare twins, who struggled for superiority, as it were, even in the birth. The first-born of these was called Esau, which signifies *red*, on account of his complexion; and the other Jacob, or *the supplanter*.

* JACOB'S BRIDGE (See Engraving).—This bridge takes its name (*Jissr Yakoub*) from a tradition that it marks the spot where the patriarch Jacob crossed the Jordan on his return from Padan-aram. But it is also sometimes called *Jissr Beni Yakoub*, the Bridge of Jacob's Sons, which may suggest that the name is rather derivable from an Arab tribe so called. It is about two miles below the Lake Houle. The river here flows through a narrow bed, and in a rapid stream; and here, to very remote times, has been the high road from all parts of Palestine to Damascus. The bridge is a very solid fabric, well built, with a high curve to the middle, like all Syrian bridges. It is composed of three arches in the style of these constructions. Near this bridge, on the east, is a khan much frequented by travellers, in the middle of which are ruins of an ancient square building, constructed with basalt, and having columns at its four angles. This is explained by the fact that the khan is built upon the remains of a fortress erected by the Crusaders to command the passage of the Jordan. Its foundation is attributed to Baldwin IV., king of Jerusalem; and William of Tyre states that it was erected in six months. The possession of so important a post was hotly disputed by the Moslems, and after several unsuccessful attempts, Saladin carried it by assault, and caused it to be destroyed. The khan is the common rendezvous of the caravans to and from Damascus and Acre. A guard of a few soldiers is always maintained here by the government, chiefly for the purpose of collecting the *ghaffer*, or tax paid by all Christians who cross the bridge. This tax is ordinarily about ninepence a-head; but the pilgrims who pass at Easter, on their way to Jerusalem, are required to pay not less than seven shillings—at least it was formerly; but, we believe, the distinctive tax on Christians has been abolished by the Egyptian government, and that, instead of it, a general tax on laden beasts has been substituted. The Rev. R. S. Hardy only notices that —"A tax of three piastres is imposed upon every laden camel, two upon every mule, and one upon every ass. The tax was in the year 1832 farmed for 20,000 piastres."

As these lads grew up, their dispositions and pursuits varied in the extreme. Esau, robust and impetuous, devoted his time wholly to the sports of the field; but Jacob was "a plain man," easy in his temper, and of a domestic turn. The first won his father's affection by bringing him venison, which the old man loved; and the other became the darling of Rebekah, by the suavity of his manners, and by his obedience to her will.

Rebekah, while she was with child, went and inquired of the Lord respecting her condition, and received for answer this prophecy: "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." Gen. xxv. 23. This circumstance accounts plainly for that partiality which she had for Jacob, and for the steps she took in his behalf to wrest the blessing from his brother. But evil is not to be done that good may come of it: and though Isaac was blameable in acting from mean motives against the divine direction, yet Rebekah stands justly reproachable for putting a deception upon him, and teaching Jacob the art of low cunning and equivocation.

The first particular in Jacob's life does not present us with a very favorable feature in his character, at least in appearance. He was one day employed in dressing a dish of pottage of peculiar savoriness. The circumstance, perhaps, may be deemed by some superficial observers as mean and unworthy, beneath the person of whom it is recorded, and as far below the dignity of history. But this objection will only show the futility and emptiness of hypercritics, who lose sight of the simplicity of early ages, and judge of the manners of men, and of the style of writing in all ages, by one rule, fashioned according to modern customs. This incident in the story of Jacob is one of those minute beauties which, in the crowd of events, recorded in the Bible, we are apt to pass over without notice. Men of the greatest eminence in those times were not above employments of this kind, and the Grecian poet places his most favorite heroes in similar situations.

EGYPTIAN CULINARY VESSELS.

Esau, on his return from hunting, finds his brother thus exercised, and, being fatigued and hungry, begs a mess of pottage with great earnestness, saying, at the same time, that he "was faint." The boon requested was trivial, and the condition of Esau ought to have excited the compassion of Jacob; but he, taking advantage of his eagerness, refused to grant it, except on the condition of his relinquishing to him the birthright. We cannot approve of this conduct in Jacob, though the grovelling spirit of Esau deserved punishment. He could not but know the tenor of the divine promise, and the consequent privileges which were attached to the primogenitureship. To be a patriarch included priesthood and sovereignty; but Esau appears to have lost all concern about religion, and as to legitimate rights he cared little for them, provided he could lead a roving and an independent life. His answer to Jacob implies a contempt for that which he ought to have regarded as a sacred privilege; and Esau said, "Behold I am at the point to die, [or ready to famish,] and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" He accordingly sold his birthright unto Jacob, and confirmed the sale by a solemn oath.

Rebekah had impressed the value of this birthright upon the mind of her favorite son from his infancy, and encouraged him to obtain it by any means. She moreover was intent to secure for him all the benefits attached to that privilege, and no doubt endeavored to bring her husband to acknowledge Jacob as his heir. But Isaac, though

acquainted with the declaration of Heaven respecting his two sons, that "the elder should serve the younger," was very unwilling to deprive Esau of his claim. He resolved upon giving him the blessing, which, in fact, was to transfer over to him the patriarchal authority; but herein we have already seen, in the life of Isaac, his design was frustrated by the craft of Rebekah, and the deception of her favorite son In the conduct of Jacob there is much to pity and much to censure. He had some repugnance to the fraud, mixed with fear lest his father should discover it. Rebekah, however, was resolved not to be diverted from obtaining her long desired object, and overcame, by her entreaties, all his scruples. Jacob's interview with his aged father presents us with some awful incidents. When Isaac asked how it was that he had found the venison so quickly, he answered, "The LORD thy GOD brought it to me." A falsehood is at all times odious and shameful, but when it is covered with a religious profession it becomes detestable. It was a shocking profanation of the name of GOD to allege it in support of a vile fraud; but Jacob then knew nothing of real religion. He had the words of piety at command. and also an outward appearance of it, but an acquaintance with the ALMIGHTY as "his GOD" was yet wanting. But from crooked and strange things Providence produces good, and makes even the weaknesses and follies of men conducive to the most important and beneficial purposes. Isaac's sensuality was rightly punished, and his unjustifiable partiality received a severe mortification by the means which he adopted to gratify his appetite.

Had he not been so anxious about his favorite venison, Rebekah would have wanted an opportunity to contrive this specious artifice; and though she probably might have succeeded by other means, yet the peace of his family would not have been so materially injured. Isaac little thought that he was counteracting his own wishes, while he was pronouncing over Jacob a blessing in these solemn words: "GOD give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let people serve thee and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee. Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee." Gen. xxvii. 28, 29.

It was an exact prophecy of the greatness to which the line of Jacob should arrive, and the latter part reminds us of another character who, without designing it, and even contrary to his wish, pronounced the same execration upon the enemies of Jacob. When Balaam stood upon the top of Peor, attended by the king of Moab and his courtiers, GOD compelled him to deliver this declaration respecting Israel: "Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee." Numbers xxiv. 9.

But the patriarch and the diviner are no otherwise to be compared. Isaac's fondness for Esau may be attributed to parental weakness; though even herein he was to be blamed, for he was not ignorant that a divine voice had assigned the priority to Jacob. The course of Providence is not to be altered by human devices; and the crimes of men will be overruled to effect what divine wisdom has planned. But fraud and injustice will meet with punishment in some shape or other. Esau, deprived of the blessing, is filled with so much anger against his brother, that he makes no scruple of openly avowing his intention to murder him. Rebekah, on being informed of Esau's sanguinary intent. feels a natural anxiety for the safety of her beloved child, and immediately adopts the prudent resolution of sending him away privately to her brother in Mesopotamia. She communicates her design to Isaac, but urges as a motive for it her apprehension lest Jacob should copy his brother's example, in taking a wife from a Canaanitish family. The patriarch acquiesced in her proposal, and calling Jacob, he "charged him, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, thy mother's father, and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban, thy mother's brother. And GOD ALMIGHTY bless thee, and make thee fruitful and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people: and give the blessing of Abraham to thee, and to thy seed with thee, that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which GOD gave unto Abraham."

Here Isaac evidently yields to the conviction that Jacob was destined by the ALMIGHTY to be the heir of that precious promise which he had received as a sacred deposite from Abraham; and, therefore, he transfers it to him in the same explicit terms in which it was originally given from above.

Esau on being made acquainted with the departure of Jacob, and the affectionate manner in which Isaac had dismissed him, and that the ostensible motive for this

journey was to procure a wife in Padan-aram, immediately went unto Ishmael, and took his daughter Mahalath to wife, because he knew it would grieve his father.

We turn our eyes now to the solitary wanderer, travelling on foot in a trackless desert toward Haran. His going without attendants is easily to be accounted for, from the fearful concern of his mother, lest Esau should acquire a knowledge of his route. Thus the guilty conduct both of mother and son was justly punished; she who was so eager to secure the inheritance for her favorite, is under the necessity of sending him forth as an exile into the wide world; and he who could meanly take advantage of his brother's necessity, is made to suffer hunger and fatigue in the wilderness. But GOD has gracious designs toward Jacob, and in the depth of his distress makes himself known unto him, as he had unto his fathers. The shades of night begin to close upon the traveller, and no place of rest appears in view. There is not even a friendly cave at hand, beneath whose covert he can take shelter during the hours of darkness and danger. But the "shepherd of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps;" he keeps his faithful servants, in the night as well as in the day, beneath the shadow of his wing. Jacob, fearing to proceed farther, looks around him for some place to rest himself till the morning, and fixes upon a spot called Luz, which signifies an almond-tree, from the abundance of those trees which grew thereabouts. Here he took up his lodging, and chose a stone for his pillow. The situation and accommodations were very uncomfortable, yet the traveller, overpowered with fatigue, soon closed his eyes in sleep. While he lay in this place his mental eye was favored with a vision the most remarkable upon record. A ladder was set upon the earth, the top of which reached to heaven, and the angels of GOD ascended and descended upon it. On the summit appeared the divine Majesty, or the visible symbol of GOD's presence, in a manner indescribable, whence issued a voice assuring Jacob of his protection, and confirming to him all the promises which had been made to Abraham and to Isaac.

ALMOND TREE (*Amugdalus Communis*).

A Jewish commentator of eminence has given us the following ingenious and just explanation of this glorious vision. "The ladder represents divine Providence, which governs all things, and particularly now directed Jacob in his journey, every step wherein was under the divine direction. Its being placed upon the earth signified the steadfastness of Providence, which nothing is able to shake. The top of it reaching to heaven shows us that it extends itself all the world over, to everything great or small, high or low. The several steps in the ladder signify the various motions of the divine power and wisdom. The angels which went up and down are the great ministers of GOD's providence, by whom he manages all things here below, and who are never idle, but always in motion to succor and assist the servants of GOD. Their ascending shows their going to receive the divine orders and commands, and their descending the execution of them. Or, to speak more particularly of Jacob's present condition, one signified their safe conduct of him in his journey to Padan-aram, and the other their bringing him home again. Above the whole appeared the ALMIGHTY, as the immoveable director of all events; from whom all things proceed as the first cause, and return as the last end."

When Jacob awoke, the awful impression of this vision remained perfect in his mind. He had received a manifestation of the divine presence, and he felt a holy dread at the idea that this was the peculiar place where the Majesty of heaven held communion with the earth. Though the visitation was full of love and promise, yet there was something in it so awful and tremendous that it made Jacob afraid, and he "said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of GOD; and this is the gate of heaven." Gen. xxviii. 17.

Now if such merciful communications between GOD and man are awful, and fill the souls of the righteous with "fear and trembling," how shall the ungodly and sinners abide the visitation of the ALMIGHTY? How will they appear when the descending Majesty of heaven shall come in judgment, seated in the clouds, and surrounded by millions of glorious angels ready to execute his commands? Let this solemn consideration have a deep impression upon our minds, and make us earnest to secure the divine favor while the ladder of mercy, or the redemption wrought out for us by JESUS CHRIST, remains open to admit sinners into the "gates of heaven."

Jacob, in a grateful and devout spirit, consecrated this favored spot by setting up "a stone for a pillar" upon the top of some other stones which he had gathered into a heap, as a monument of GOD's mercy to him. This place he called *Bethel*, which signifies the "house of GOD;" and to render the consecration of it complete, he took oil and poured it thereon; a ceremony very remarkable, and afterwards admitted into the ritual of Moses. Prophets, priests, and kings were all anointed with oil among the Jews, as types of MESSIAH, which word, as well as its correspondent Greek one, CHRIST, signifies *the Anointed*. Hence it is that the psalmist, prophesying of the REDEEMER, thus describes him: "The LORD thy GOD hath anointed thee with the *oil* of gladness above thy fellows." Ps. xlv. 7.

The mode of anointing an Egyptian King, drawn from the representations most commonly found on the ancient monuments.

The next religious act which Jacob performed at this consecrated place was a solemn vow, that if GOD would protect and preserve him in his journey, so that he might return back to his father's house, he would suffer no idolatry in his family, and that this spot where the pillar stood should be dedicated to the worship of the living GOD to whom also the tenth of his property should be devoted.

From hence Jacob set forward with a gladdened heart toward Mesopotamia, and we read of nothing else that befell him till he came to the well of Haran, where he met with some shepherds tending their flocks, of whom he inquired concerning his uncle. "And he said unto them, Is he well? And they said, He is well: and behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep." While he was thus conversing with the shepherds, his cousin drew near to the well with her flock, and Jacob instantly, with a natural politeness and affection, went "and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban, his mother's brother." Gen. xxix. 9, 10. The incident is beautifully picturesque. The female characters in this early part of the Scripture history are all represented as engaged in domestic employments, when they are brought into particular notice. Sarah, at the entertainment of the angels, made cakes with her own hands, and baked them upon the hearth; Rebekah was discovered by Eleazer in the act of drawing water for her brother's household; and Rachel, the beautiful and beloved wife of Jacob, appears first tending her father's sheep.

What an instructive lesson do not these instances afford to the fair sex, not to be above those employments which are eminently adapted to render them "helps meet for their husbands." In the early ages, and among the most enlightened people, females of the highest rank applied themselves to domestic occupations, and were not ashamed to be found at the loom and the distaff. Was Rachel hurt at being discovered in the dress of a shepherdess by Jacob? or did he think the less favorably of his

A Pillar in the Wilderness.

Gen. xxxv. 20; *Deut.* xi. 3; *Judges* ix. 6; *Sam.* xviii. 18; *Isa.* xix. 19.

fair cousin in meeting her thus at the well of Haran? On the contrary a mutual affection appears to have been excited by the interview, and the obliging gallantry of the stranger, no doubt, made a favorable impression at once upon the heart of Rachel. But when the ebullitions of joy at this meeting brought grateful tears from his eyes, and he discovered himself to her as the son of Rebekah, Rachel, full of eager gladness, ran home to inform her father, while Jacob remained in charge of the flock.

Laban, on hearing that his sister's son was arrived, ran to meet him, and welcomed him to his house with great apparent affection. Jacob honestly informed his uncle of all that had passed in his father's family, and, consequently, the reason of his coming to Padan-aram, at the same time offering to abide there as his servant. Laban readily accepted this tender of service, but insisted on paying him wages, saying, "Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou, therefore, serve me for naught?"

That love which had taken possession of the heart of Jacob towards Rachel prompted him to make an offer of serving her father for her seven years. The old man, covetous enough, saw through the advantages to be made by such a bargain, and took Jacob at his word. There was a striking difference between the courtship of Isaac and Rebekah, and that of Jacob and Rachel. Eleazer, the prudent and indefatigable steward of Abraham, intent upon his master's present happiness, brought the contract to an issue directly; but Laban, seeing that Jacob was more timorous and easy to be imposed upon, contrived to bind him to his service, and to make it seem a favor bestowed. Jacob, however, was satisfied in serving seven years for Rachel, and "they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her."

Love makes time fly swiftly in the presence of the object beloved, and supported by a consciousness of being equally esteemed in return. Jacob had constant opportunities of seeing and admiring the amiable qualities of Rachel, and he anticipated with delight the approaching day when he could honestly claim the precious reward of his services. With what pleasure did he observe the period shorten which was to put him in possession of his first love; and with what satisfaction did he find his individual affairs prosper, which gave him a fair prospect of being able to maintain his family independent of his uncle. When the seven years were elapsed he demanded the fulfilment of the contract, to which Laban assented, and made a great feast in honor of the nuptials; but in the evening the crafty knave placed Leah, his eldest daughter, in Jacob's bed, and he knew it not till the morning. On discovering the cheat which had been put upon him, and which fitly recompensed him for the trick he had played upon his father, he remonstrated with his uncle, and said, "What is this that thou hast done unto me? Did I not serve with thee for Rachel? Wherefore hast thou then beguiled me?" The other could only urge in his excuse that "it was contrary to the custom of the country to marry the younger before the first-born," though, if it was so, he should have mentioned it, as an honest man and a considerate father, when Jacob's proposal was first made. But Laban had more regard for his own interest than for the rules of rectitude, the welfare of his nephew, or even the peace of his own children. He was sensible of the value of Jacob to him, seeing that his affairs had prospered mightily since his arrival, and, therefore, he contrived this expedient to retain him in his service. Well knowing that love will make large sacrifices to attain its object, he offered Jacob to give him Rachel also at the end of the week, on condition of his serving him another seven years. Jacob consented, and served Laban seven other years for Rachel, "whom he loved more than Leah." But this conduct of Jacob was not pleasing in the sight of GOD, and therefore he caused Leah, the despised, and, according to the Hebrew phrase, hated Leah, to be fruitful while Rachel remained barren. Polygamy was not from the beginning, and certainly never had a divine sanction; and though good men fell into the bad practice, yet it was generally followed by circumstances which showed divine displeasure. The peace of Jacob's family was soon disturbed. The fertility of Leah excited the jealousy of Rachel, and she at length forgot religion, decency, and respect for her husband, by saying, "Give me children, or else I die." Jacob's reply was natural and proper, but it was expressed in passion: "And his anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, Am I GOD'S stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of thy womb?" Gen. xxx. 1, 2. The good man had not lost his love for Rachel, though he was angry, but he trembled at the impiety of her demand, seeing that the difference between her and Leah was manifestly of divine appointment.

Rachel, however, is determined upon obtaining her ends by some means or other,

JACOB, LABAN, AND HIS DAUGHTERS.

and, nerefore, gives Bilhah, her handmaid, to Jacob, thinking to obtain children by her This concubine did accordingly bear two sons, whom Rachel called Dan and Naphtali

To judge of the practice of ancient times is somewhat difficult, and this, among others, appears to have been so common as to excite no censure. It was adopted by Sarah, in the case of Hagar; and Leah, copying her sister's example, gave Zilpah, her handmaid, to Jacob, by whom he had two sons, Gad and Asher.

But though the objects desired were obtained, yet the comfort of the family was wretchedly broken thereby. Jarring interests produced much dissension, and Jacob experienced vexation in the very quarter where he had looked for happiness. They who carve for themselves in the affairs of life without consulting the divine will, must not be surprised at meeting with crosses and troubles in the enjoyment of their eager pursuits. Poor Jacob has not only care and labor in Laban's family, but a weight of domestic trouble upon his head, through the feuds and jealousies of his wives. Leah bears six sons and a daughter to Jacob, but every addition to his family only serves to irritate the mind, and to provoke the complaints of Rachel.

At length Providence, which had designs to accomplish of the greatest importance, caused Rachel to be the joyful mother of a son, to whom, in the fulness of her heart, she gave the name of *Joseph*, saying, "GOD hath taken away my reproach, and the LORD will add unto me another son." Gen. xxx. 22.

About this time, it seems, the term of Jacob's servitude ended, and we cannot wonder at the desire which he expressed of returning home to his native land. His family was multiplied, and GOD had blessed his industry in proportion to the increase of his cares. It was, therefore, natural for him to think of establishing himself in his own country. But Laban was not so willing to part with him. The greedy old man perceived that his affairs had prospered exceedingly since Jacob had been with him, and he could not but acknowledge the fact. "If I have found favor in thine eyes," says he, "tarry, I pray thee: for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake."

After much solicitation, Jacob consented to remain, on condition of receiving, as his hire, that part of the produce of the flocks which should be "ring-streaked, speckled, and spotted." Laban gladly consented to the proposal, thinking that these would certainly be but few in number, judging only by past experience, and from his long acquaintance with the qualities of cattle. The flocks were accordingly separated, those of the description mentioned in the contract being removed by Laban's sons to the distance of three days' journey; a precaution which shows that the owner was determined his son-in-law should possess as little advantage as possible. But Jacob, instructed from above, "took rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chestnut tree, and peeled white streaks in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods." These he set in the watering-troughs when the flocks came to drink, so that the flocks conceived, and brought forth cattle ring-streaked, speckled, and spotted. But, it is added, that Jacob took care not to place the rods before the feeble cattle, only in the way of the best, so that "the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's." By this device "he increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses" Thus the ungenerous, mercenary, and deceitful Laban was punished at last, even by his over-eagerness after riches; for it was not a regard for Jacob, it was not any affection to his daughters and his grandchildren, it was not any religious or moral principle that led him to solicit Jacob's continuance; but it was a sordid and selfish wish to avail himself of that worldly blessing which he saw resting upon his son-in-law's endeavors.

The old miser thought, no doubt, that Jacob's offer was a very foolish one, and pleased himself much with the advantage which he should derive from it. But when he saw that the most beautiful of his flocks brought forth nothing but "speckled and spotted young," his envious heart was corroded, and his countenance soon indicated the dissatisfied state of his mind. His sons likewise, who appear to have inherited all the meanness of their father's temper, began to murmur at the success of Jacob, and they said, "He hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's. hath he gotten all this glory." Gen. xxxi. 1.

The condition of Jacob was now more critical than it had hitherto been. He was surrounded by a set of jealous and vengeful relations, who hated him for his prosperity, and who probably were not averse to any violent measures that could be adopted against him. In this state he applied, where every person should, to GOD in

JACOB WATERING HIS FLOCK.

prayer. It is pleasing to see that the increase of worldly good has not made Jacob unmindful of that merciful Being who visited and comforted him when he was a lonely wanderer in the wilderness. If the divine direction and support were necessary to him in that forlorn condition, how much more so is it now, when he is exposed to numerous temptations arising from the cares of a large family, a prodigious accumulation of flocks and herds, and, above all, when he is assailed by the calumnies, reproaches, and threats of his envious brethren!

But Jacob applies to his GOD before he will take any step in this trying exigency; and he receives this command and promise: "Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee." No man ever consulted the direction of Heaven without feeling the advantage of it. Jacob has now a sure dependance, and therefore, calling his wives Leah and Rachel, he relates to them the injurious treatment which he had met with from their father, and the divine vision which he had received to "return unto the land of his kindred."

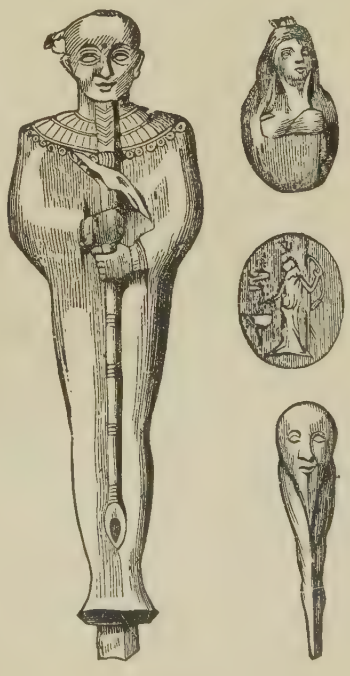
The reply of the woman shows still more explicitly the sordid and unnatural disposition of their father, and they said unto Jacob, "Is there yet any portion or inherit ance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and quite devoured our money." What a dreadful thing is it that the desire of riches should prevail over all the honorable and tender principles of nature! The miser neither loves nor is beloved of any. He has none of those sweet sensations which prompt to the exercise of benevolence, but turns every circumstance and connexion to selfish gratification. Even parental affection is absorbed by the love of riches; and children shall be sacrificed, at least their happiness, to the golden image with more than religious earnestness. Laban cared nothing for the comfort of his daughters, but, on the contrary, abandoned them almost to prostitution to add a little more to his large possessions. Not only so, but without any concern for them or their little ones, he robbed them of their portions, and their husband of his lawful wages.

Who then can pity Laban, or who, after contemplating his conduct, can blame Jacob, either for the device he adopted, or for his hasty departure from Haran?

While Laban was gone to shear his sheep, Jacob took his wives and his children, and "all that he had gotten in Padan-aram, to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan." The good man was very scrupulous to take nothing with him but what was honestly his own; but Rachel, less particular, made free with her father's images. On this subject much speculation has been formed, and many ingenious inquiries have been made.

That Laban had a knowledge of the true GOD there can be no doubt, because he owns him by his name JEHOVAH, the GOD of Abraham, and the GOD of Nahor, and the GOD of their father; but then it was a mere nominal profession, without any real affection. This is evident from his character; and it is farther evident from this circumstance of his keeping *Teraphim*, or the images of the gods of the country, similar to what the Romans afterward called *Lares*, or household gods. But why Rachel should take these things away is a matter of surprise. Some will have it that she did it out of zeal, and to deprive her father of his idolatrous objects. This, however, is not so probable as that she had some tincture left of the superstition of the country, and considered these teraphim as a sort of oracles, which might be safely consulted in times of difficulty.

The flight of Jacob was so dexterously managed, that three days elapsed before Laban was informed of it, on which he im-



TERAPHIM?

A Halt.

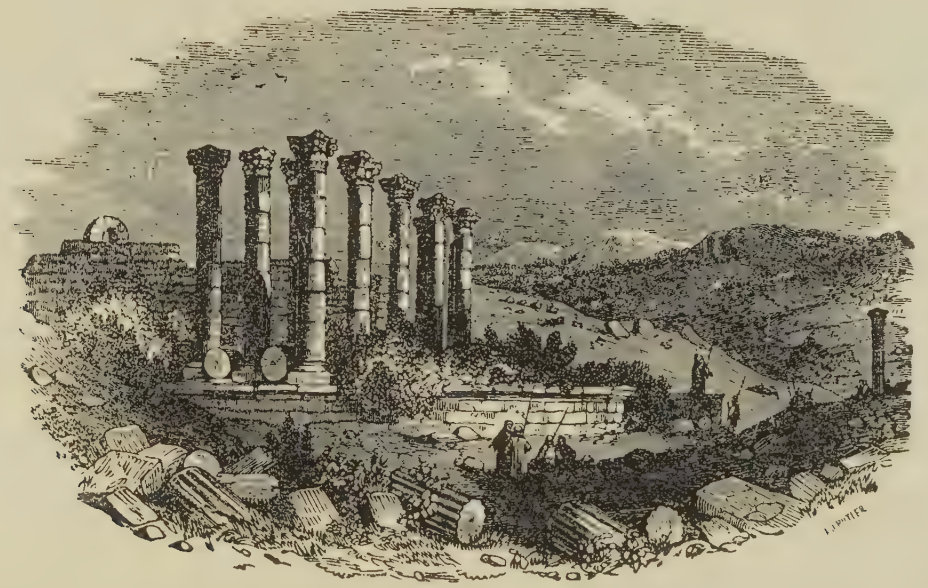
LABAN SEARCHING FOR HIS IDOLS.

mediately collected a body of his relations, and set out in pursuit of the fugitive. No doubt his intention was either to bring him back by force, or to put him to death; but GOD, who watched over his servant, and commanded him to adopt the measure which he had taken, appeared to Laban in a dream by night, and warned him against the slightest injury to Jacob, either in word or deed. The next morning Laban overtook his nephew in Mount Gilead; where he pitched his tent, and resolved to spend the time usually allotted to rest. As soon as they met, the hoary hypocrite began to put on a friendly guise, and to remonstrate with him on the abruptness of his departure. The divine interdict, however, pressed powerfully upon his mind, and he was afraid to disobey it; but though he could not injure Jacob, he would fain accuse him of acting ungratefully. His language is artful, and, without considering the character of the man, it might appear just; but Satan himself can argue well, and put on the appearance of innocence. "And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters as captives taken with the sword? Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me? And didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp? And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? Thou hast now done foolishly in so doing." Gen. xxxi. 25, &c. All this might lead an inexperienced bystander into a belief that Laban was a very kind-hearted father, and that Jacob had acted toward him in a very rude and ungrateful manner. But Laban knew well enough that fatherly affection had no influence upon his mind in thus hastening after Jacob. The truth will come out at last, whatever craft may be used to disguise it; and therefore Laban, perhaps unwittingly, adds, "that it was in his power to hurt his nephew at that moment; but, says he, the GOD of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take heed that thou speakest not to Jacob either good or bad."

After this declaration of his belief in the true GOD, who would expect that his very next inquiry should be after his idols? Yet so it is: "Though thou wouldst needs be gone," says he, "wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?" He dreaded the power of the GOD of Jacob, but still harbors a close affection for wretched images which could not protect themselves. Jacob firmly but modestly pleads his excuse, and spurning at the mean charge of having robbed Laban of stuff which he abhorred, bids him make a strict search throughout all the tents. On coming into that where Rachel was, she artfully excused herself from rising to salute her father, it "being with her after the manner of women," but the fact was, the teraphim were concealed beneath the furniture on which she sat.

The inquiry being ended, and no gods to be found, Jacob conceived himself warranted in expostulating with Laban on his ungenerous, suspicious, and unnatural conduct. A nobler speech can hardly be found anywhere, than that of the honest patriarch on this occasion. "And Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass, what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me? Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? Set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both. This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee, I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. Thus I was: in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from my eyes. Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle; and thou hast changed my wages ten times. Except the GOD of my father, the GOD of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty; but GOD hath seen mine affliction, and the labor of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight."

To these allegations Laban could make no reply. He seems to have been confounded and softened by the honesty of Jacob, and, therefore, proposed to enter into a covenant with him on that spot, according to the custom of the age. Jacob readily consented, and set up a heap of stones, with one upright in the midst as a pillar. Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and afterward all parties partook of a feast, in the nature of a covenant of peace and of amity. Early the next morning Laban took leave of his sons and of his daughters, and returned homeward, while Jacob, full of joy and gratitude, hastened on toward Canaan.



SCENE IN THE MOUNTAINS OF GILEAD.—RUINS OF JERASH.

He had scarcely quitted Mount Gilead before he was met by the angels of GOD, and, on account of their number, he called the place *Mahanaim*, which signifies two hosts. Those heavenly messengers appeared, doubtless, to assure him of the divine favor and protection, and the name which he gave to the spot indicates his belief that their mission had his safeguard for its object. Indeed, at this moment he stood in need of the interposition of Heaven, for he was approaching the residence of his brother Esau, who was become the head of a numerous and powerful people. Jacob naturally concluded that the resentment of Esau was not so entirely subdued as that no sparks of it remained ready to flame into fury if they should chance to meet. He knew that the injury which he had done to his brother was great, and heightened by many aggravating circumstances, on which account he could not but fear that an advantage would be taken to revenge the whole upon him now he was returning homeward through his territory. To conceal his march was impossible, for his retinue was large and his progress slow. He had recourse, therefore, to an expedient which was prudent and conciliating. He sent messengers before him to announce his approach, and to deliver a summary account of himself and his proceedings in the most respectful terms. When the messengers returned to Jacob, they informed him that they had delivered the message, but that Esau, instead of sending an answer by them, was coming himself to "meet him, and four hundred men with him." This intelligence greatly alarmed Jacob, for he had no doubt that his brother had hostile designs against him, since he was coming with so powerful a train. To make the best, however, of his circumstances, he divided his train into two companies, saying, "If Esau come to the one company and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape." In this trying situation he addressed the following prayer to Heaven, at the close of which he modestly urges that promise upon which he had been enabled to encounter so many perils hitherto: "O GOD of my father Abraham, and GOD of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."

When he had ended his prayer, he quitted his camp, and prepared some valuable presents of cattle, which he sent in front of his company, with orders to the servants who had the charge of them, that if they were asked to whom they belonged their answer should be, "They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present unto my lord Esau, and behold also he is behind us." Having thus sent forward his present as a peace-offering, Jacob arranged the remainder of his train in excellent order, reserving, however, his beloved Rachel and her son Joseph in the rear, that if his brother should come as an enemy they might have some chance of escaping.

The whole procession being safely passed over the Jabbok, a small river which falls into the Jordan, Jacob remained behind, most probably employed in prayer and supplication. While he was thus alone he was encouraged by an angel in human form, whom at first, probably, he took for one of Esau's attendants, and with whom he wrestled till the dawn of day. Through the whole of this extraordinary contest the strength of the patriarch was so great that the angel prevailed not, insomuch that at last "he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, so that he halted. When the morning came the stranger said, Let me go; and he said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me." By this it seems he had now discovered the supernatural quality of his antagonist, and therefore in faith claimed his blessing. The angel, in reply, asked his name, which he changed to Israel, signifying a *mighty prince*, or a prince *with God*, and the reason is added, "For as a prince thou hast power with GOD and with men, and thou shalt prevail."

Jacob was desirous of knowing the name of this wonderful being, but the other checked his curiosity, by saying, "Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there." On the departure of the angel the patriarch, filled with grateful astonishment, called the place where this memorable interview happened Peniel, "For," says he, "I have seen GOD face to face, and my life is preserved." Gen. xxxii. 20.

JACOB WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL.

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River Jabbok.

The design of this conflict was to strengthen the faith of the patriarch, and to assure him that he had nothing to fear from his brother Esau. Before he met the angel, his mind was greatly distressed with apprehensions: but now he is cheered, and satisfied that the "shield of Abraham" is his defence also.

The prophet Hosea gives this comment upon the circumstance: "By his strength Jacob had power with GOD: yea, he had power over the angel and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto him." Hos. xii. 3, 4.

When the sun was up "he halted," and on that account "it became an established custom among the Israelites not to eat of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh."

On the same day he met his brother, to whom he paid the respect which, in those days, was customary to sovereign princes, "bowing himself to the ground seven times." Esau's heart was melted into tenderness on perceiving his brother. Resentment gave way to the feelings of nature, and he fell on his neck, and kissed him, and they wept.

PERSIAN BOWING BEFORE THE KING.

He who blessed Jacob in the way, touched the heart of Esau, and changed his evil purposes into love and kindness. The once divided brothers unite in tender embrace; and they who separated years ago, under circumstances the most unfavorable and unsocial, now meet in affection and weep for joy. The dismal fears of Jacob are dispersed, and the angry passions of Esau are lost. "Oh how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Ps. cxxxiii. 1. What a beautiful and what an instructive picture is this! How does it reproach the unbrotherly conduct of those persons, who, for petty causes, for trifling affronts, or through mercenary motives, entertain resentment against their nearest relations! Esau had some grounds for reproving Jacob, but no sooner does he see him than the tide of natural affection rushes upon his heart, and all hatred and all malice are obliterated at once. Mutual civilities and presents having passed between the reconciled brothers, they separated, Esau returning to his residence in Mount Seir, and Jacob journeying towards Canaan. When the latter arrived at a favorable situation, about five miles from the eastern bank of the Jordan, he made preparations for some stay there, by building for his own household one of the easily constructed houses of that time, with numerous sheds or booths for his people and cattle. From this circumstance the site took the name of Succoth, or *booths*, which was continued to a town built in a later day on that spot.

BOOTHS, OR SHEDS.

SUCCOTH.

After this he removed to the neighborhood of Shechem, where he purchased a field for a hundred pieces of money. At this place he resolves to settle, and, accordingly, erected an altar for divine worship, which he dedicated to GOD, "the GOD of Israel." But human comforts are uncertain, and when a man has, in his own imagination, conquered the principal difficulties of life, and attained "a place of rest" for the remainder of his days, an unexpected evil will arise and destroy all his pleasing expectations. Jacob has got a house and an estate in the land of promise, but in the midst of the satisfaction thence arising, a keen stroke of domestic affliction attacks him, and he is forced again into a pilgrimage state. His daughter Dinah, attracted by the gayeties of Shechem, went thither at the celebration of some great festival, which probably was of an idolatrous kind. This is the account of Josephus, and it is a natural illustration of that given in the sacred text, where it is said, that "she went to see the daughters of the land." Those females were idolaters, and it did not become the daughter of Jacob to solicit the acquaintance of such persons. There could be no chance of doing any good among them; but there was too great a probability that her own manners might be contaminated by their conversation. The curiosity of Dinah was fatal to her own peace, and to that of her venerable father. The son of Hamor, king of Shechem, became enamored with her charms, and, giving way to licentious passion, he carried her off, and wrought her disgrace. After this violence he probably repented of the act, and desired his father to mediate with Jacob, that he might obtain her for a wife. Hamor condescended to the request of his son, and proposed the matter to Jacob; but the brothers of Dinah took up the cause of their sister, and would not consent, unless the prince and his subjects changed their religion, and became circumcised. To this Hamor and his people agreed; and there appeared every sign of an honorable termination of this unhappy affair. But the whole was an abominable artifice of Simeon and Levi, Jacob's sons, who, with a chosen band of servants and friends, entered the city in the night, and put all the males to the sword, Hamor and his son not excepted.

After they had committed this atrocious crime, and plundered the place, they carried off their sister in triumph, and returned to their father, who was struck with grief at the horrid deed, and justly feared that it would rouse all the inhabitants of the land against him. So deep, indeed, was the impression made upon his mind of this transaction, that he remembered it upon his death-bed, and expressed his resentment of it in terms that amounted to an execration of the perpetrators. "Simeon and Levi are brethren, instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O, my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united! for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." Gen. xlix. 5, 6, 7. It was natural for Jacob to apprehend that a confederacy would be formed among the Canaanites against him; but "the terror of GOD was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob."

From this place the patriarch moved, at the divine command, to Bethel; but first he resolutely purged his family of all their idols and fragments of superstition which they had picked up in their communion with the heathenish tribes. These things he broke to pieces, and hid them under an oak near Shechem, because, say some of the Jewish commentators, he had not time wholly to destroy them, being in haste to obey the injunction he had received from GOD.

Does not this little incident tend to throw some light upon the judgments with which the good man had lately been visited? Should not a pious worshipper of the true GOD, and one to whom had been given such gracious manifestations, have been more careful of the principles and conduct of his household? Ought Jacob to have permitted superstitious images and Canaanitish fashions in his family, the tendency of which was to corrupt the minds and to alienate the affections of his family from the GOD of Abraham? It seems from this act of Jacob, on his departure from Shechem, that he was conscious of having acted improperly, and that he had been guilty of too easy a compliance with the vain desires of his wives and children.

Having fulfilled this duty, he sets out for Bethel, the ever-memorable place where, when he fled from the angry face of his brother Esau, he experienced the goodness of the LORD, and received that gracious promise which he had seen eminently fulfilled.

On the patriarch's arrival in Bethel the ALMIGHTY renewed his covenant with him in person, and Jacob erected a pillar there to commemorate this circumstance, and consecrated the same, by pouring oil thereon. Here Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah, died, and was buried beneath an oak, which was called the oak of weeping. to express the sorrow occasioned by the loss of a faithful domestic. This was the prelude to a more distressing event, and to a mourning far more grievous; for, as they journeyed from Bethel, Rachel was taken in labor, and died, leaving an infant son, to whom, as she was expiring, the tender mother gave the emphatic name of Ben-oni, *the son of my sorrow*, but his father afterward altered it to Benjamin, *the son of my right hand.*

JACOB AT BETHEL.

After he had committed the remains of his beloved spouse to the earth, and erected a pillar of remembrance over her grave, Jacob pursued his journey; but shortly afterward he experienced another wound, occasioned by an incestuous intercourse between Reuben, his eldest son, and Bilhah, the handmaid of Rachel. Thus annoyed and afflicted, the patriarch bent his course to his father's house, where, by the good providence of GOD, he arrived in safety, after an absence of many years, checkered by a great variety of trials and deliverances, troubles and blessings. His grief for the loss of Rachel, and for the evil conduct of his children, was alleviated by the sight of his aged father, who was now in his one hundred and sixty-third year. As no mention is made of Rebekah, perhaps she was already numbered with the dead; but if not, what must have been her delight at holding once more in her aged arms the child of her love, her partiality, and apprehensions. Jacob is returned in health and increased in riches, with a train of children; and, to render the happy circumstance still more delightful, Esau is no longer his enemy, but his kind and affectionate friend.

RACHEL'S TOMB.

Jacob seems now to have found a resting-place after a long course of trouble; but he has yet more trials, and sharp ones, to endure in his pilgrimage. All his sorrows are domestic, and originate in the bad tempers and conduct of is own family. His flocks and his herds have wonderfully increased, and his ten elder sons are brought up to the pastoral employment.

These sons of Jacob were men of very vicious dispositions, and their actions were so shameful, that Joseph, who assisted them in their employment, reported the life they led to his father. Here opens the beautiful story of this wonderful youth, in whom we are interested the first moment he appears in view. He is now in his seventeenth year, the son of the beloved Rachel, beautiful, candid, and pious. Is it then to be wondered at that "Jacob should love Joseph more than all his children?"

The permanent good qualities of the youth, when contrasted with the ungoverned licentious tempers and habits of his brethren, warranted the partiality. But there is a parental preference which may be commendable, and yet, when indulged, the same may become culpable and injurious. In this partiality to Joseph are sown the seeds

of numerous troubles to Jacob and his family, all, however, designed by Providence to bring forth good. Jacob, in the fondness of his heart, makes Joseph a coat of many colors. Gen. xxxvii. 3. This was an open manifestation of his superior regard for this lad, and it is not, therefore, surprising that the other sons of Jacob should hate him. This distinction was imprudent, for it tended to inflame the envious passions of the elder brethren, and to excite in the mind of the favorite vanity and pride.

Joseph was not altogether unaffected by this mark of his father's affection, this "gaudy coat." He had some remarkable dreams, which indicated that he should attain a kind of sovereignty over his brethren, to whom, with exultation, he related them, as he did also to his father. The patriarch was not pleased with his son for relating these extraordinary visions, but then he saw there was more in them than the mere sportings of fancy, and the wandering chimeras of the imagination. Joseph's brethren envied him the more for his dreams, but his father observed the saying, and watched the event.

The elder sons of Jacob fed their flocks as far from Hebron as Shechem, probably on account of the excellency of the pasturage, and to preserve the land, which their father bought in that country of Hamor. Being desirous to know how it fared with them, the patriarch sent thither his favorite, his beloved Joseph, little thinking that he should see him no more for many years. Joseph leaves his father's house never to return to it again, and goes in quest of his brethren. When he approached the place where they kept their flocks, the inhuman wretches began to give vent to their malice, and to plot his death. Their very first thought was murder, but this, through the persuasion of Reuben, was prevented; and at length, by the advice of Judah, they sold him to a caravan of merchants, who carried him to Egypt, and disposed of him as a slave.

There we leave the innocent and oppressed Joseph to seek the merciless crew in the wilderness. Not knowing what account to give to their father of his beloved child, and fearful that he would suspect them of some foul practice, they had recourse to an artifice which shows their depravity in the strongest colors. Had they contrived some tale, by which Jacob might yet entertain a hope of seeing Joseph again, we might be disposed to soften our resentment towards them; but the villains, disregarding the wounded feelings of their father, carried him his darling's coat dyed in blood, and asked whether he knew it, with all the indifference imaginable, saying, at the same time, that they had found it. Jacob knew the gaudy garment, the fatal source of so much mischief, too well to mistake it; but he had no suspicion that the bearers of it were mocking him with a fictitious tale, or that they had deprived him of his beloved child. And "he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him: Joseph is, without doubt, rent in pieces. And Jacob rent his clothes and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted: and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." Gen. xxxvii. 34, 35.

The grief of Jacob must have been intense, but with what face could his deceitful sons affect to administer comfort to him, while they withheld the only circumstance which could give balm to his heart? If they had said, "Thy son liveth," but "he is in the house of bondage," the cloud of sorrow, though heavy, would have broken, and some faint rays of hope would have cheered the heart of the afflicted Jacob But the mighty secret, and the abundant consolation, must be deferred till the workings of Providence have attained their proper point. The whole counsel was of GOD, though wicked men were following their own devices, and though the righteous, for a time, were in sorrow and affliction.

Of Jacob we read little during the period of his separation from his beloved Joseph; but, to add to his trouble, his son Judah, about this time, married a Canaanitish woman, and had afterwards an incestuous connexion with his own daughter-in-law Tamar; circumstances peculiarly offensive to the pious patriarch.

At length the ALMIGHTY brings on a visitation of judgment upon the country where Jacob lived. A famine arose in the land, which was so severe, that the inhabitants were driven to the greatest extremity, and Jacob's family partook of the distress. Hearing that there was corn in Egypt, the patriarch sent his ten sons thither to purchase a supply for their sustenance. There, however, they were treated as spies by

CAMELS. A CARAVAN OF MERCHANTS PASSING THE GREAT DESERT.

the intelligent governor, who, to prove their sincerity, required them to bring down Benjamin, their younger brother, whom they had mentioned as being with their father in Canaan. This governor, who was no other than Joseph, detained Simeon as a pledge for their return, according to the stipulation; but how hardly was Jacob brought to give his consent! What a cutting stroke is this to his already lacerated heart! "Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me."

The persuasions of Reuben were ineffectual. Jacob was deaf to all his entreaties, and expressed himself in these terms of genuine affection: "My son shall not go down with you: for his brother is dead, and he is left alone; if mischief befall him in the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

But when their supply of corn was exhausted, and another journey to Egypt became necessary, Judah plainly told his father that they could not go down without Benjamin, because "the man had said, Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you." Compelled by the necessity of the case, after many painful struggles of nature, Jacob gives his consent, but prudently directs his sons to carry a present with them to the man to ensure his favor. In the fervor of piety he dismisses them with this prayer: "God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." A mild spirit of resignation to the divine will at last took possession of his heart, and he yielded his children and himself to the Almighty. Good old Jacob passes many a wishful day in Canaan while his sons are in Egypt. Oh! how anxiously does the venerable man look towards the track they have taken to see them return with Simeon and with Benjamin! And were not his prayers constantly and fervently addressed on the behalf of his absent children, that God would both preserve them in their going out, and in their coming home? Doubtless the altar was not forsaken, where, at the head of his remaining family, he supplicated and blessed the God of his fathers; nor were the closet duties omitted, in which he poured out his soul to the Father of mercies!

He might, and doubtless did, hope to embrace his Benjamin once more, and to see his family collected around his dying bed; but there was one blessing reserved for him, which Jacob was not yet permitted to know or to expect. Joseph, as we have seen, was not out of his tender recollection, but could he entertain the remotest idea that he was in the land of the living, and that there was a chance of his beholding him yet again? How mysterious are the ways of Providence, and literally past finding out! Jacob, though he could by divine inspiration predict the precise lot and circumstances of each of the tribes, and particularly utter a precise prophecy with respect to the lineage and time of the Messiah, knew nothing of what was passing in Egypt. He eagerly waited for the return of his sons; and when they came back, how satisfied, how grateful is the good old patriarch at seeing Simeon, and embracing Benjamin. How eagerly does he inquire of them the particulars of what had happened to them in their journey, and the treatment they had received from the sagacious and rigid governor in Egypt! But that governor is Joseph. Yes; the sons of Jacob are prompt to inform their father that this wonderful man, this seemingly severe, but kind, forgiving, and exalted viceroy, is no other than his beloved Joseph! It is too much;—the tide of blessings runs too strongly upon the heart, and Jacob faints away. The tale appeared too marvellous to be credited at first, but when the wagons came in sight, which were despatched by the governor to bring his father and his family to Egypt, he could no longer withhold his belief. His spirit revives at the sight of these objects, which convince him of the joyful truth, and he exclaims: "It is enough; Joseph, my son, is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." Gen. xlv. 28.

He hastily gathers his property together, and sets out on a journey, which, to one of his great age, was painful and difficult. But what are dangers, and difficulties, and fatigue, and pain to him who has a beloved object in view, which has been long given up as irrecoverable? On coming to Beer-sheba, the place where his father Isaac once resided, and had been favored with peculiar manifestations of the divine favor, the patriarch stopped to worship that God who had been so gracious to him, and perhaps to wait his direction, whether it was his will that he should leave the land of promise and go into Egypt. God did indeed appear to him in this place, and not only permitted him to pursue his journey, but added a promise that he would be with him there, and that his posterity should there become a great nation.

Thus encouraged, Jacob went down into Egypt, where he was met by Joseph, who "fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while." The tenderness of this scene might have been described in more copious expressions, but the simplicity with which the sacred writer has touched it, far exceeds all the boasted elegance of language. The first words of Jacob unto Joseph, after a long and pathetic silence, were, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.

So great was Joseph in the esteem of Pharaoh, that the king assigned the best province in Egypt, which was Goshen, for the residence of Jacob and his family. Joseph introduced his father to his royal master, and the patriarch, in his priestly character, blessed Pharaoh, or, as it should seem, supplicated the divine favor for him. The venerable appearance and the pious demeanor of Jacob led the monarch to inquire his age, to which he replied, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." Gen. xlvii. 9. This answer of the patriarch is not the language of discontent, but the solemn reflection of a man who had experienced a large share of trouble, and knew that the whole of human life is indeed but "a vain show."

Jacob spent the remainder of his days in tranquillity and prosperity, enjoying the society of his beloved child seventeen years. The close of his life was a happy calm, after a varied and very troublesome course. But "Israel must die." There is no exemption from this stroke, and it matters little where it happens, whether at home or in a strange land, whether at Hebron or in Egypt, to him who, with Jacob, has the divine presence to bless him in his dying hours. The patriarch, perceiving that his dissolution was not far off, sent for Joseph, and bound him by a solemn promise to bury him with his fathers in Canaan. Shortly after this Jacob was taken sick, and it being reported to Joseph, he hastened to the bed-side of his father, taking with him his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim. On hearing that his dutiful son was come, Jacob exerted all his strength, and sat up in his bed to receive him, and to impart to him that blessing which, in the spirit of prophecy, he was commissioned to bequeath. He next blessed the infant children of Joseph, but, as he placed his hands upon their heads, he crossed them, putting his right upon Ephraim the younger, and his left upon Manasseh the elder. Joseph wished to correct the mistake of his father, but Jacob persisted, being guided by a divine impulse, and he gave to each of the lads a portion in Israel, at the same time declaring that the younger should be greater than the elder.

When this interview was ended, Jacob caused all his sons to assemble round his dying bed, that he might inform them what would befall them in the last days. Of all the predictions which he pronounced with his expiring breath, the most remarkable and the most interesting to us is that to Judah. "The sceptre," says he, "shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until SHILOH come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Gen. xlix. 10.

EGYPTIAN AND PERSIAN SCEPTRES.

One grand object was in the mind of the patriarch, as it had been the contemplation of his predecessors, even the illustrious deliverer who should arise in after ages to redeem Israel, and restore the wreck of the fall. The promised seed was the constant object of faithful expectation; and ordinances, institutions, and predictions, all had an allusion, positive or incidental, to the MESSIAH. Hitherto the promise has been confined generally to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that from them the glorious blessing should arise; but now, under the divine direction, the dying patriarch foretels in what tribe, and at what period the great Restorer shall come. The sovereign and legislative authority shall continue in the possession of Judah, till from that tribe Shiloh appear, and then the royalty must cease. This was exactly fulfilled, for the tribe of Judah possessed legislative power till the time of CHRIST, and from that period the Jewish nation have

MOURNING WOMEN OF EGYPT.

neither had dominion nor priesthood. The MESSIAH was the gatherer of the people in the literal sense of the words, for by him the middle wall of partition has been broken down, and the Gentiles have been admitted into communion with him as the spiritual head of his church. JESUS CHRIST, therefore, must either be the true Shiloh, or the prophecy has failed, for the Jews cannot prove that they have had anything like regal or legislative power since his crucifixion. When they were so clamorous for the execution of JESUS, and Pilate jeeringly told them to take the law into their own hands, they shrunk fearfully from the proposal, and acknowleged their slavish state by saying, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." John xviii. 31. Here then we have a glorious proof of the veracity of Scripture, and an incontestable evidence of the truth of the Christian religion.

As the patriarch was addressing his children, he exclaimed, "I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD!" This faith in the SAVIOUR was that which had hitherto supported him in his long and troublesome pilgrimage, and now that he is come to the close of it, a clearer manifestation of this great object is made to him, so that what was before obscurely beheld and but dimly seen in the vast distance, was now brought home to his mind, and rendered fully evident to him. What he had so long waited for in humble, pious hope, is brought nigh to cheer him in his last moments, and he can say, as Simeon afterwards did, "Now, LORD, let thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Luke ii. 29, 30.

When Jacob had finished blessing his sons, he charged them to bury him in the cave of Machpelah, with Abraham and Isaac; and "then gathering his feet into the bed, he yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people."

Joseph, having closed the eyes of his father, and wept over him, set about fulfilling the promise he had made to him. He accordingly commanded his servants, the physicians, to embalm the body of Jacob; and after a general mourning for the patriarch

BANDAGING AND PAINTING AN EMBALMED BODY.
(From the ancient Egyptian monuments.)

seventy days, Joseph solicited the king's permission to go with the remains of his father into Canaan, to which Pharaoh readily consented; and with Joseph went up all the state officers and principal nobility of Egypt, so that when they came to the place of interment, the Canaanites were astonished, and said, "This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians." Gen. l. 11.

Thus have we brought pious Jacob "unto the house appointed for all living," after a checkered life of one hundred and forty-seven years, the greatest number of which were spent in anxiety and trouble. But confidence in GOD was his firm support, and by an obedience to the divine commands he was carried through all his trials, and brought at last to enjoy abundant peace and comfort. His remains were preserved by the art of the embalmers, but the Holy Spirit has embalmed his memory in the records of truth, so that his life stands as an instructive lesson to all generations.

PHARAOH'S PALACE.

JOSEPH.

BORN IN THE YEAR OF THE WORLD, 2260; DIED, 2369.

DIVINE Providence often acts in a manner unaccountable to human wisdom. The most unlikely and unpromising circumstances are adopted to effect the greatest and the best of purposes. Weak instruments are chosen to bring about vast designs; and troubles, misfortunes, persecutions, and even crimes, are all made subservient to the mighty purposes of GOD. He "takes his way in the sea, and his path in the great waters," to accomplish his designs, for this very reason, that man may not know them till they are fulfilled; and that when he sees how they have been brought about, "he may adore Him who is excellent in counsel, doing wonders."

History shows us innumerable instances of this great truth; but in the sacred records we have it more strikingly elucidated, because the impression of a divine agency is marked upon every narrative. In the life of Joseph we are presented with such a complex series of strange events, all necessarily connected, and yet each so perplexing, that the mind cannot resist the conviction, that the whole was the result of divine direction.

We have already taken a cursory glance of this wonderful youth in the life of his father. To the fond partiality of Jacob may be attributed the baneful envy of his other sons, and the subsequent distresses of Joseph. It was natural for him to love the amiable son of Rachel; and more so, as his manners and disposition were diametrically opposite to those of his other sons. Jacob, however, is said to have loved Joseph because he was the "son of his old age;" a reason weak and frivolous, but natural in persons advanced in life. The same weakness prompted Jacob to distinguish his favorite above the rest of his children, by dressing him in a splendid vesture, a garment of divers colors. This badge of parental partiality heightened the malice of Joseph's brethren, so that they could not "speak peaceably unto him."

COAT OF MANY COLORS.

Gaudy dress is one of those things which fond parents are too apt to indulge, especially when their darling children are somewhat handsomer than ordinary. This was the case here. Joseph was beautiful in his person, and therefore his doating father dressed him in showy attire, to set him off to the best advantage. Ridiculous and dangerous distinction! Ridiculous, because nature requires no ornaments, and virtue is not advanced by the trappings of fashion. Dangerous, because it tended to excite envy and hatred in the breasts of Joseph's brethren, and in his own mind vanity and conceit. To be unmoved by this mark of his father's affection, would have argued more philosophy than could be expected in a youth of seventeen. We cannot blame Joseph for being a little elated by this distinction; but his father and his brethren were reprehensible, the one for want of prudence, and the others for making so trifling a cause the occasion of a most unnatural hatred.

The elder sons of Jacob were, as we have already seen, very vicious and unprincipled men, especially those which he had by Bilhah and Zilpah. With these Joseph was associated in the pastoral employment, a circumstance that throws considerable blame upon Jacob, if he really knew the characters of those children. But we are charitably to hope that he did not, for we are told that their conversation and behavior were so bad, that Joseph, young as he was, could not endure their society, and returned to his father, to whom he related their proceedings. On the mere face of the narrative we might be apt to fancy that Joseph was a tale-bearer; but the fact was, that being vexed with the unrighteous conversation of his brethren, he forsook them, and of course his father would naturally inquire the reason. Truth is not to be concealed because the vices of a brother will be exposed thereby. It was not right to keep Jacob in ignorance of his children's evil conduct, for by so doing the proper exercise of his patriarchal authority and parental admonitions would be omitted, and their reformation prevented. In this conduct of Joseph there is much to admire. The vicious examples of elder brethren have generally too powerful an influence upon the younger, if they live together; and the inexperience of youth can hardly resist the force of such patterns and such precepts as these. Joseph, at that early age, resists the immoral courses of his brothers, is deaf to their persuasions, unmindful of their ridicule, and determined to be virtuous. With great prudence, he therefore quits their company, returns to his father, and "brings unto him their evil report."

The pious Jacob could not be unmoved at this heroic instance of virtue in his beloved child, and the increase of his partiality to him was natural and just.

But if this evidence of their father's preference of Joseph was hateful to the other sons, a circumstance soon after occurred which tended to inflame their malice into revenge. Joseph was favored with two very remarkable dreams, both alike in points of representation, and the one strongly confirming the other.

Dreams, in general, are chimerical delusions, the scattered images of sensible things floating on the mind, and forming incongruous but sometimes very singular associations in sleep. But that this method of communication has been adopted by Providence to inform men of future events, to warn them of danger, to give them directions in cases of importance, and to bring them to repentance and religion, there can be no doubt, if the testimony of some of the best of men is to be credited. and the Bible is to be literally believed.

The dreams of Joseph were hieroglyphic prognostics of his future eminence; and were so very striking, that we cannot be surprised at their producing a strong impression upon his mind. But he was wanting in a prudent regard for his own happiness, and in a respect for his father and brethren, in relating to them these wonderful manifestations.

"And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed. For behold we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and behold your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet more for his dreams, and for his words." Gen. xxxvii. 5, &c.

The brethren of Joseph could not well avoid this application of the dream; and from their pointed reproach it is evident that he himself expressed a confidence that the vision had his exaltation for its object.

His next dream was similar, but attended with more striking and august particulars. "And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold I have dreamed a dream more; and behold the sun, and the moon, and the eleven stars, made obeisance to me."

Joseph had found that the relation of his former dream highly displeased his brethren, and provoked their displeasure. Now this was calculated to heighten their animosity against him, for it was a full confirmation of the first, with the addition of aggravating circumstances. He ought not, therefore, to have communicated it to them; but there was something in it so flattering to human vanity, so pleasing to ambition, that Joseph could not help teasing and mortifying his brethren, by telling them this dream also. Their envy was increased: and even Jacob could not but chide Joseph for his forwardness, saying, "What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I, and thy mother, and thy brethren, indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"

JOSEPH RELATING HIS DREAM TO HIS BRETHREN.

But though Jacob was vexed at the idea of being made subject, with all his family, unto his younger son, for so the dream seemed to imply, yet the singular connexion of these dreams, and the clearness of them, had an effect upon his mind, and he observed them, or treasured them up in his memory, conceiving that they had a divine origin, and were the representations of some great event that should happen in his family. He could not but perceive that there was something supernatural in these visitations, and therefore he watched the issue with serious attention. The elder sons of Jacob were inflamed the more against Joseph for uttering such remarkable and striking prognostics, which indicated his gaining a pre-eminence over them. They already had a rooted enmity against him, on account of that preference which their father evinced for him; and that enmity is now heightened into the most rancorous malice. His dreams made a deep impression on their minds, and they were resolved to counteract the prediction, by making away with the dreamer. But vain are the attempts of mortals to cross the designs of Providence. What God hath purposed and foretold shall assuredly come to pass, even by the very instruments employed by his enemies to prevent it.

An occasion soon occurred when the envious brethren of Joseph thought themselves secure in putting an end to his elevated expectations. They were feeding their flocks in Shechem, which was at a considerable distance from Beer-sheba, where Jacob dwelt, and the patriarch, from a tender solicitude for their welfare, sent thither his darling son to see how they fared. The manner in which he addressed Joseph was sweetly expressive of his affection for his children, who badly requited such love and concern: "Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again." Gen. xxxvii. 14. Poor Jacob! little did he think, when he sent his Joseph on this benevolent errand, that he should see him no more for many years; that for that period he would to him be dead, and that the very sons, whose welfare he was so anxious to know, were plotting the death of their innocent brother. Joseph, with cheerful willingness, obeys his father's commands, and sets out for Shechem; but not finding them there, he goes farther, even to Dothan, where he is informed, by a stranger, that they had removed with their flocks.

The shepherds, as soon as they saw Joseph "afar off," immediately conspired against him to slay him. Their first thought was murder, which sufficiently proves that the idea was not novel, but that his destruction had often been a matter of consultation among them. "And they said one to another, Behold this dreamer cometh. Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say some evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

Here we see the source of their sanguinary purposes. The dreams of Joseph rankle in their gloomy minds; and rather than such humiliation should ever befall them, they are determined to crush the embryo sovereign in the bud.

They have no solicitous desires to know how it fares with their families at home; to learn whether good or evil tidings have brought Joseph thus far to see them. Envy, malice, and revenge take possession of their souls, and obliterate at once every humane sentiment.

But how powerful is the divine influence in its secret workings upon the human heart! Reuben, the elder son of Jacob, and one whose conduct shows, in other respects, the most depraved mind, felt an impulsive motion to save the life of his brother. He artfully persuades the rest not to imbrue their hands in the blood of so near a relation, and represents to them that their purpose might be answered equally as well by casting him into a pit, and leaving him there to perish. The proposal of Reuben was the result of a good-natured design to deliver Joseph from the malice of his brothers; but their consent to it only shows a more savage spirit of cruelty, for a death of this kind was worse than immediate slaughter.

Joseph, on descrying the tents of his brethren, felt a lively joy and satisfaction. Doubtless he was much fatigued by a long journey, and by the disappointment of not finding them in Shechem; but now he feels delight at meeting with the objects of his search, and hastens forward with eager alacrity. How different were his sensations and theirs! He is ready to salute and embrace his brethren, they to seize upon him as their prey. Instead of meeting with friends, he is fallen among the worst of enemies. His mission is not heard, his tale is stopped, his coat, that envied badge of a father's fondness, is stripped off; in vain he lifts his streaming eyes to heaven, in vain his uplifted hands supplicate mercy, in vain he calls upon each of his brothers by

name, in vain he tries to touch their obdurate hearts by urging the name of their venerable father—deaf to all entreaties, and insensible to every feeling of humanity, they "stripped Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colors, that was on him; and they took him and cast him into a pit; and the pit was empty, there was no water in it."

When these unnatural beings had thus consigned Joseph to a death the most dreadful of all others, that of perishing for want, they contentedly sat themselves down to eat bread. Unmindful of the wretched condition of their fatigued and hungry brother, these wretches calmly indulge in a repast, and exult in the midst of it at the cowardly revenge they have taken of a hapless youth, whose only fault is the enjoying a father's fondness, and the manifest favor of Providence. That divine Being who marked every circumstance of this nefarious transaction, caused a travelling company of Ishmaelites to pass near the spot where these brothers were feasting. It instantly occurred to Judah that a fair opportunity was presented to get effectually rid of Joseph, without having his murder to answer for, by selling him as a slave to these merchants. The proposition was readily acceded to, for hereby they had not only the pleasure of removing him out of the way, but of doing it upon terms of advantage to themselves. A sordid love of gain mixed itself with their other bad qualities, and the mercenary wretches sold a branch of their own family to strangers, with as little compunction as if he had been a lamb or a young bullock. Inhuman traffic! how soon did it get into use among men, and even in ages of simplicity, wherein we see so many beautiful touches of genuine affection and sensibility!

But Joseph is in better hands, though among those who "traded in the persons of men," than among unfeeling, envious, and vengeful brethren. Mysterious Providence! How should we admire the wisdom of thy ways, and, from this instance, learn submission to all the dark and perplexing events of human life.

If Joseph had not missed his brethren in Shechem, or had arrived sooner or later at Dothan, these merchants would have passed by without effecting his deliverance; but every circumstance has its necessary connexion with the chain of events, and the slightest incidents are of moment in the general plan. The avarice of Joseph's brethren shall be presented with an opportunity of gratification, that their prisoner may, through slavery and banishment, attain to glory and honor.

Reuben was not present while this bargain was transacting, and it is not improbable but that he had taken a circuitous course, for the purpose of rescuing Joseph from his confinement, and assisting him in escaping home to his father. On coming to the pit, and not finding Joseph there, he was seized with agony, and rent his clothes, the usual manner of expressing uncommon concern and

RENDING CLOTHES.

BEDOUINS BARGAINING FOR A SLAVE.

grief in those days. He hastened to his brethren, and his language to them shows that he had formed the resolution of saving his brother's life, and that he felt the keenest anguish at being disappointed of his benevolent purpose. "The child is not," says he, "and I, whither shall I go?" Gen. xxxvii. 29, 30. His brethren soon pacified Reuben, and if any blame attaches to him in this affair, it is for keeping a cruel silence towards his father, and for tamely acquiescing with the others in imposing an artful tale upon Jacob, that they had found Joseph's coat covered with blood.

But here we must leave the patriarch and his vicious sons to follow Joseph down into Egypt. Here he is soon transferred, like a bundle of merchandise, from the hands of the traders to Potiphar, an officer of rank, and captain of the guard to Pharaoh.

EGYPTIAN STEWARDS.

In this new situation, so different from that to which he had been accustomed, who does not tremble for the morals no less than for the safety of Joseph? But when the heart is established in grace, there is ground to hope that even in seasons of the greatest difficulty, and under the most dangerous temptations, the possessor of it will be enabled to preserve his integrity and his innocence. The principles of pure religion had been sown early in the mind of Joseph by his pious father; and they had happily taken deep root long before this misfortune befell him. Hereby he experienced consolation in this state of exile and slavery, and found that though he was far removed from the habitation of his fond parent, he was not removed from the presence and favor of his father's GOD. Joseph yielded to his lot with a good grace, and accommodated his mind to his circumstances with cheerfulness. He performed the part of a dutiful servant without murmuring, and, though brought up to different prospects, was not sullen or dissatisfied in this menial situation.

Potiphar appears to have been a man of discernment and consideration. He saw the good qualities of his servant, he admired the readiness with which he attended to his duties, and he found that his property was safe under his management. With much prudence, therefore, he made Joseph his steward, and committed unto him the entire direction of his household affairs.

Placed in this more elevated station, Joseph attracted the notice of his mistress, Potiphar's wife. He was in the prime of his days, and elegant in his person. The amorous Egyptian could not behold the accomplished Hebrew without admiration, and that at length produced a most violent affection. On what a tottering basis is Joseph now placed, and, when all circumstances are taken into account, how little likelihood is there of his escaping this bewitching temptation!

The wife of Potiphar, giving way to her criminal passion, solicited a return of it from Joseph with importunity; but the virtuous youth replied in these expressions: "Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand. There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against GOD?" Gen. xxxix. 8, 9.

Joseph had a sacred regard for the honor of his master, and a grateful sense of the duty which he owed to him; but the principle which supported him in this trial was a holy fear of that BEING whose eye pervades every recess. It would be well for us, if, when upon the threshold of any improper act, we were to put Joseph's question to ourselves, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against GOD?"

Joseph's mistress reiterated her attempts upon his virtue; she urged many fond solicitations, and exercised all the attracting allurements she could devise to win his affections. This she did "day by day," till at length she threw aside all decorum and

Joseph was obliged to fly for his virtue, as a man would for his life. There are some temptations which, to be avoided, must be fled from, while others must be braved out by a manly resistance. The soft and bewitching allurements of vice are dangerous, and are surely destructive if parleyed with. They must be shunned with horror, lest desire should arise in the soul. The "lips of the harlot drop as the honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil; but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, her steps take hold on hell." Excellent then is the advice of wisdom unto youth in this case: "Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house. For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings." Prov. v. 3, 4, 5, 8, 21.

MODERN EGYPTIAN LADY.

Disappointment and mortification changed love into hatred, and the whole soul of this abandoned woman became a prey to the most violent passions. As she could not corrupt Joseph, she was determined to ruin him; and therefore accused him of having attempted violence upon her person. The tale was artfully told, his garment, which she had seized in enticing him, remained in her room, and circumstantial evidence corroborated the charge, for he had fled. Potiphar sent his virtuous servant to prison, and it does not appear that Joseph endeavored to save himself from punishment, by accusing his mistress. Perhaps he had more regard for his master's honor than to expose her infidelity, or he might think that his story, instead of meeting with credit, would only excite Potiphar's rage to inflict a more dreadful punishment upon him.

Joseph left the vindication of his character to GOD, and possessing inward peace and satisfaction, the dungeon is to him a palace. When the mind is calm and assured of the divine favor, the most wretched condition is endured with cheerfulness, and gloomy cells are enlivened with celestial rays; but where there is consciousness of guilt, palaces are dungeons, robes of state are fetters, and beds of down are thorns and briers.

That gracious Being who had led Joseph from his father's tent for a great and mighty purpose, accompanied him in prison and turned the heart of the jailer in his favor. The temper and manners of the Hebrew were so engaging, that the keeper, though of an occupation which naturally tends to blunt the feelings of human kindness, could not but admire him; and, at length, he placed such confidence in his integrity, as to commit the entire care of the prison into his hand.

Two of Pharaoh's head servants, having incurred his displeasure, were sent to this prison while Joseph was the under jailer, and thus the Providence of GOD orders remote and strange circumstances to unite for the advancement of his purposes. The anger of the king, and the lust of Potiphar's wife, bring, by a necessary connexion, Joseph and these servants together in the same prison, and thereby his deliverance and elevation are effected. Still supernatural means are made use of even here. Joseph's dreams excited the envy of his brethren, and the dreams of these state prisoners prove the means of his enlargement. The chief baker and chief butler related the visions of the night to the under keeper, whose interpretation of each was exactly fulfilled, in the execution of the former, and in the restoration of the latter to the royal favor.

Joseph took this opportunity of interesting the chief butler in his behalf, and, after he had explained to him his dream, which promised him good, he said, "Think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness unto me; and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house; for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon." Gen. xl. 14, 15.

It was natural for Joseph to embrace so fair an occasion to obtain his liberty, and surely he had a strong claim upon the gratitude of the man; but though the event corresponded with the prediction, the chief butler, when he regained his former station, "remembered not Joseph, but forgat him."

Two years pass away, and the ungrateful courtier never once thinks of the young Hebrew, who so pathetically recommended himself to his protection. But Joseph is not to owe any part of his greatness to human kindness or to worldly policy. The whole plan is of divine origin, and all the steps are consequently under infallible direction. Had the chief butler interfered in his behalf, Potiphar might have prejudiced the mind of Pharaoh against him; and if not, yet the butler himself would have assumed some credit for his part in the advancement of Joseph.

Heaven accomplishes the matter in a way which is to bring more honor upon Joseph, by showing that a divine spirit rests upon him, and that he is the favorite of GOD.

Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is visited by two remarkable dreams which greatly perplex his mind, and harass him with the gloomy fears of superstition. He sends for his magicians and soothsayers, who, in that country, were a numerous and highly venerated body of men; but they exert all their skill in vain to give satisfaction to the king. In ordinary cases their plausible tales might pass; but this was of a supernatural kind, and the same power which communicated these representations to Pharaoh in his sleep, deprived the soothsayers of the faculty of invention, and impelled them to confess their inability to interpret the dreams. This disappointment only served to aggravate the desire of the king, and to inflame his curiosity to the highest pitch.

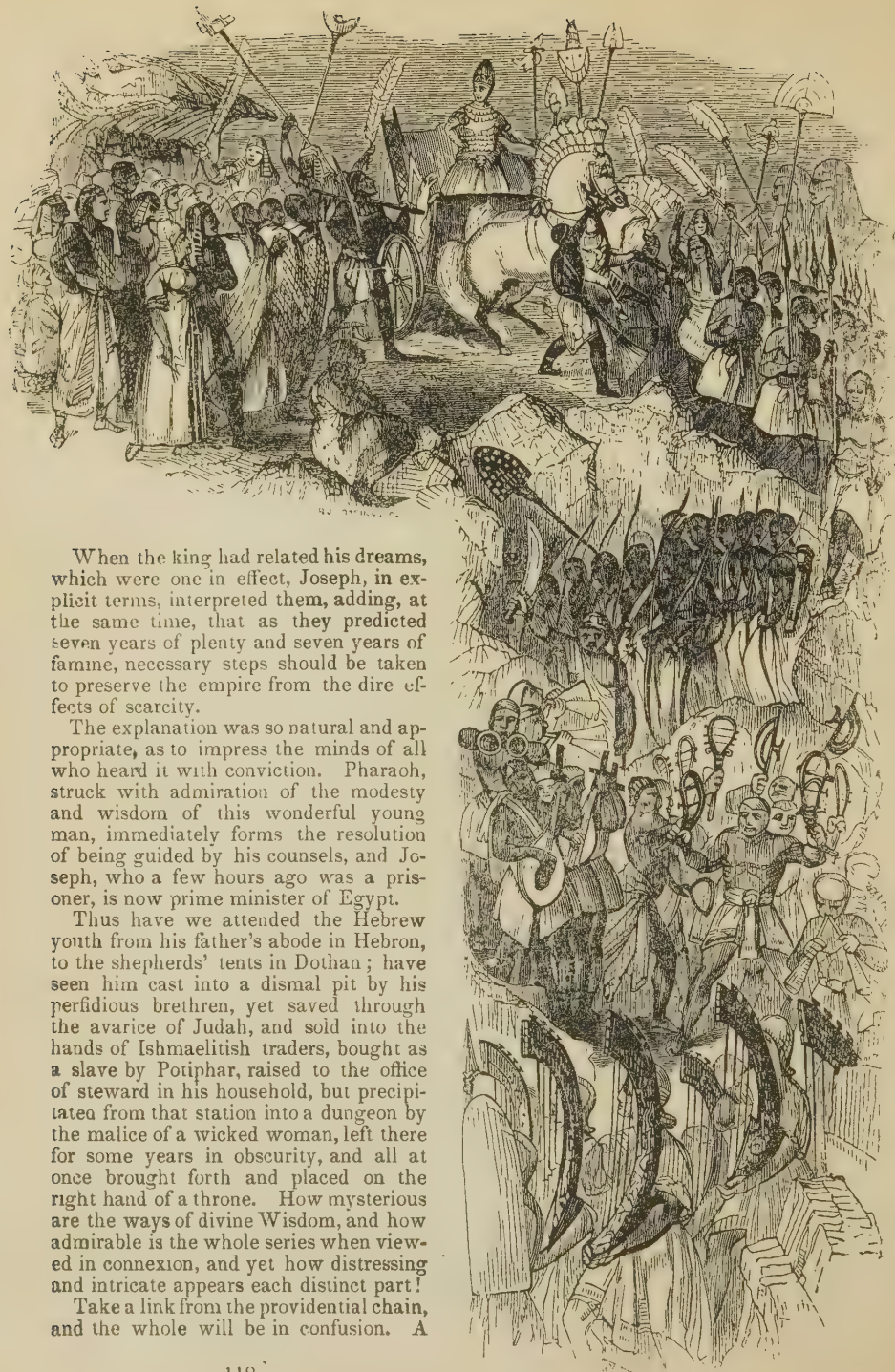
The occasion of the king's disquietude excited general conversation and inquiry; and the chief butler instantly recollected the singular dream which he had experienced in the prison, and the exact interpretation which had been given of it by Joseph. It was a fit opportunity now to atone for the neglect of his promise, and, at the same time, to ingratiate himself still more in the favor of his master. Accordingly he informed the king of the singular talents of the young man with whom he had been a fellow-prisoner; in consequence of which Joseph was sent for in all haste, and brought into the royal presence.

EGYPTIAN KING ON THE THRONE.

If we have had reason to admire Joseph hitherto as a son, as a servant, and as a faithful and compassionate underkeeper in a prison, we need not be ashamed of him now he stands before Pharaoh.

The shepherd youth speaks with modest diffidence, yet in the most dignified language. When the king tells him that he had been informed of his skill in the interpretation of dreams Joseph's answer is, "It is not in me; GOD shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Gen. xli. 16.

The pious humility of an aged saint is beautiful, but the humble and devout declaration of Joseph is still more striking and beautiful, because he stood at that moment in a circle of the most elevated characters, all fixed in attention upon him, and it was made to a mighty monarch, who acknowledged not the GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.



When the king had related his dreams, which were one in effect, Joseph, in explicit terms, interpreted them, adding, at the same time, that as they predicted seven years of plenty and seven years of famine, necessary steps should be taken to preserve the empire from the dire effects of scarcity.

The explanation was so natural and appropriate, as to impress the minds of all who heard it with conviction. Pharaoh, struck with admiration of the modesty and wisdom of this wonderful young man, immediately forms the resolution of being guided by his counsels, and Joseph, who a few hours ago was a prisoner, is now prime minister of Egypt.

Thus have we attended the Hebrew youth from his father's abode in Hebron, to the shepherds' tents in Dothan; have seen him cast into a dismal pit by his perfidious brethren, yet saved through the avarice of Judah, and sold into the hands of Ishmaelitish traders, bought as a slave by Potiphar, raised to the office of steward in his household, but precipitated from that station into a dungeon by the malice of a wicked woman, left there for some years in obscurity, and all at once brought forth and placed on the right hand of a throne. How mysterious are the ways of divine Wisdom, and how admirable is the whole series when viewed in connexion, and yet how distressing and intricate appears each distinct part!

Take a link from the providential chain, and the whole will be in confusion. A

great portion of it is suffering; but was not this necessary to prepare Joseph for that elevation to which he has now arrived? The school of adversity is the best to fit the mind for prosperity. It is well calculated to render a man humble, cautious, discreet, charitable, dutiful, and religious. Joseph has experienced the treachery of brethren, the violence of female licentiousness, the ingratitude of courtiers; he has been a shepherd, a slave, an upper servant, and a prisoner; he is, therefore, well acquainted with human nature, and knowing the instability of all earthly good, he is prepared to fill this elevated station with humility and propriety.

Excellent is the remark of an apocryphal writer upon this history, and worthy of quotation: "The divine Wisdom," says he, "when the righteous was sold, forsook him not, but delivered him from sin: she went down with him into the pit, and left him not in bonds till she brought him the sceptre of the kingdom, and power against those that oppressed him: as for them that had accused him, she showed them to be liars, and gave him perpetual glory." Wisd. x. 13, 14.

By the wonder-working hand of GOD we behold Joseph exalted to the right hand of a mighty sovereign, and possessing power over all Egypt. He is married to a princess, arrayed in robes of state, with a chain of gold about his neck, and, as he rides in the second chariot, the people shout before him, "Bow the knee," or, See the father of the king. Pharaoh gave Joseph the name of Zaphnath-Paaneah, which, according to some, signifies saviour of the world, but others, with more reason, interpret it the "revealer of secrets."

Joseph's wife was daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, which has led some injudicious critics to condemn his conduct in forming such an idolatrous alliance; but as Scripture throws no blame upon him, and as the children which he had by this union were peculiarly blessed by Providence, there is every reason to believe that, so far from Joseph having acted wrong, he did what was right, and brought his wife at least, if not her whole family, over to the truth.

Though Joseph is thus advanced to wealth and honor, he does not indulge himself in luxurious ease. He is the same faithful, diligent servant as ever. He goes through all the land of Egypt during the seven years of plenty, and establishes granaries, in which he lays up stores of corn against the approaching time of scarcity. That season comes, agreeably to his prediction; and now Egypt sees, indeed, that the blessing of the LORD is with Joseph, for she not only can supply her own people, but those of the neighboring countries, in this time of grievous famine.

And now, after the long period of thirteen years, we are brought once more to Jacob's melancholy abode in Hebron. The pious patriarch has endured much anguish during this painful interval, occasioned by the loss of his beloved child. The blood-stained garment of Joseph has, doubtless, been often contemplated with heart-rending sighs and floods of tears. But now even this sorrow gives way to another visitation, which has a tendency to over-

a Triticum sativum. *b* Holcus sorghum.
EARS OF CORN.

whelm all other distresses, the want of bread. Jacob has wealth in abundance, but that will not procure the necessaries of life in this dreadful scarcity. He hears that there is corn in Egypt, and commands his sons to take with them money, and go thither to buy food. They accordingly take this journey, and, on their arrival in Egypt, find that all applications for the purchase of corn are to be made to the governor, before whom they appear, "and bow themselves with their faces to the earth." Gen. xlii. 6. Thus the dream which they had ridiculed so much, and endeavored to frustrate, is accomplished. The change occasioned by the lapse of years, dress, and situation, prevents them from knowing Joseph, but he immediately recognises them, and forms a resolution of conducting himself strangely towards them.

With much sternness in his manner, and harshness of expression, he interrogates his brethren upon their country, and their intentions in visiting Egypt. Their answer is, to buy food; but Joseph persists in charging them with bad designs, and with being spies. He also causes them to be confined three days, and when they are brought again before him, he treats them in the same rough manner, insomuch that their consciences cannot but accuse them of their guilty conduct towards their brother. They reckon this as a judgment upon them for their unnatural behavior, and vent upon one another keen reproaches for their barbarity to Joseph. "We are verily guilty," say they, "concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake not I unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear? Therefore behold also his blood is requited."

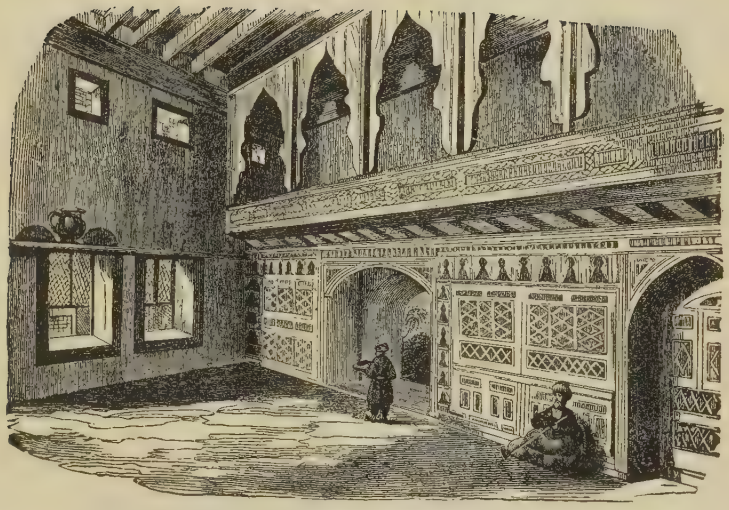
Conscience, though she may be stifled for a long time, will have a hearing at last; and if, in the hurry of business or pleasure, in health and in prosperity, the sinner can contrive to escape from her remonstrances, yet when seclusion, adversity, sickness, or sore affliction overtakes him, he will experience all her vengeance.

Joseph's brethren little thought that the rigid governor was acquainted with their language, for he spake unto them by an interpreter, and they were therefore the more free in their mutual accusations. It was gratifying to his benevolent heart to perceive that they were not dead to feeling, and that they had now a genuine sorrow for the injury they had been guilty of towards him. He was melted at the scene, and turned aside from them, and wept. The tears of Joseph were the pure drops of affection and brotherly kindness, in which no small portion of joy was mingled at finding that his brethren were alive to repentance.

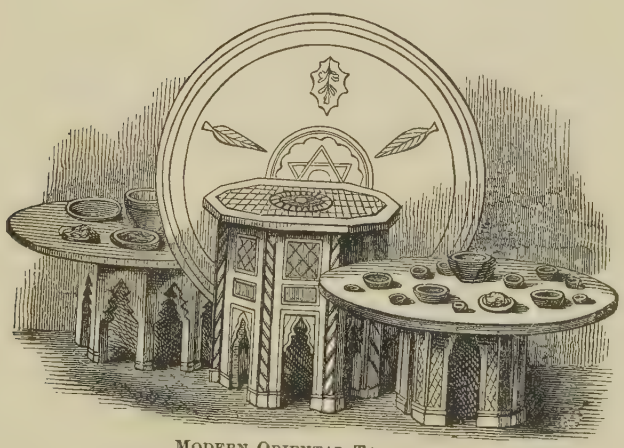
On regaining his composure, he takes up the conversation with them again upon their real intentions in coming into Egypt, and, to prove their sincerity, proceeds to bind Simeon, and commits him to prison, as a hostage for their return with Benjamin.

They were then sent away with a supply of corn for their families, and every man's money was secretly put into his sack's mouth by Joseph's orders. This circumstance, however, they did not discover till they were got far on their journey, and, when the discovery was made, fear, confusion, and astonishment seized upon their minds. Here also their consciences began to operate upon them, and that which had really a favorable appearance was interpreted into a judgment.

After some time, the brethren of Joseph return with heavy hearts into Egypt, bringing their younger brother with them. On their arrival Joseph caused them to be taken to his dwelling-house, and when the public duty of his station was ended, he hastened home, and inquired tenderly after his father, doubtless with an anxious heart to know that he was in health. "And he said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive? And they answered, Thy servant, our father, is in good health, he is yet alive: and they bowed down their heads and made obeisance." Gen. xliii. 27, 28. Again was the premonition of Heaven accomplished, so vain and impious is it to attempt the frustration of the divine counsels. With eager eye he looked round the circle for his own mother's son, whom he had left quite a child in Canaan, and, when he saw him, the tide of fraternal affection rushed strongly upon his heart, and he said, "Is this your younger brother of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son." But his feelings begin to be too much agitated, and it is not yet time to make the important discovery which he has meditated. Joseph, therefore, withdraws into a private apartment, that he may give vent to his sensibility. What delightful tears were those of this generous man in that moment of retirement! His father alive and in health, his beloved brother Benjamin under his roof, the others brought to a sense of shame for their evil conduct,



INTERIOR OF A FIRST CLASS MODERN EGYPTIAN HOUSE.



MODERN ORIENTAL TABLES.

and he has it in his power to save his family alive in this time of dearth, to support, and to forgive!

A splendid entertainment being set out, the Hebrews are placed at a table by themselves, while Joseph sits alone, and the Egyptians are seated at another, because their religious scruples prevent them from eating with the people of other countries. Here the brethren of Joseph are presented with another subject of conjecture and surprise for, by his directions, they are all seated in the order of their birth; and the mess sent to Benjamin from the governor's table, is five times larger than that of any other. These things must have filled their minds with veneration for the wonderful man, whose wisdom evidently appeared to be supernatural; for who could have informed him of their particular ages, when they were utter strangers in the land?

The liberality and pleasantness of the governor at length dispelled all their fears, and they drank and were merry.

In the morning the sons of Jacob were sent away with their asses laden with corn, and eager, no doubt, to see their father, that they might restore unto him Simeon and Benjamin. But they had scarcely turned their backs on the city when they were overtaken by Joseph's steward, who charged them with theft, in taking with them his master's cup. Conscious of their innocence, the men readily submitted to a search, first declaring, that if the cup should be found in the possession of either of them, the guilty person should die, and that the rest would readily become slaves. Ten sacks were examined, and no cup was found, to the great joy of them all; but how soon was that joy converted into horror, when, on opening that of Benjamin, the fatal object appeared! In great haste, and overwhelmed with grief, the sons of Jacob returned to the house of Joseph, where they fell to the ground before him without speaking a word, for it was needless to deny what could not be disproved. The governor, who, at their last interview, was all pleasantry and affability, is now again the stern and rigid judge. At this interesting crisis, Judah, who had made himself responsible unto his father for the return of Benjamin, arises, and with all the energy of pure eloquence, addresses a speech to Joseph, which is unparalleled in history. He does not attempt to palliate the crime, or to resist the force of evidence, which appears against his brother, but he touches the feelings of the judge, and tells a simple tale of woe with genuine pathos; he speaks to the heart of his noble auditor, because he feels in his own the whole of what he says.

CUPS.

"Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh, my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one: and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father; for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant, my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down; for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant, my father, said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons; and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces, and I saw him not since. And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now, therefore, when I come to thy servant, my father, and the lad be not with us; (seeing that his life is bound up in the

EGYPTIAN ASSES, SADDLED (Ancient).

EGYPTIAN ASSES, SADDLED (Modern).

ad's life,) it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servant shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant, our father, with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father." Gen. xliv. 18, &c.

The exquisite touches of nature in this piece, the reluctance of Jacob to part with his only remaining offspring of a beloved wife, the melancholy remembrance of the fate of his brother, and the observation that the good old man's life was bound up in the life of Benjamin, beautifully thrown into a parenthesis, could not but affect a generous heart with compassionate sympathy. Nor was the noble offer of Judah to remain a bondslave in the room of his brother, a circumstance likely to pass without effect upon the mind of a liberal man. But the motive of the offer was likely to give it a peculiar interest on this occasion, for it was a pious concern for the peace and satisfaction of his aged father; it was a dread lest, by losing his Benjamin, Jacob's heart should break, and his gray hairs be brought with unexampled sorrow to the grave.

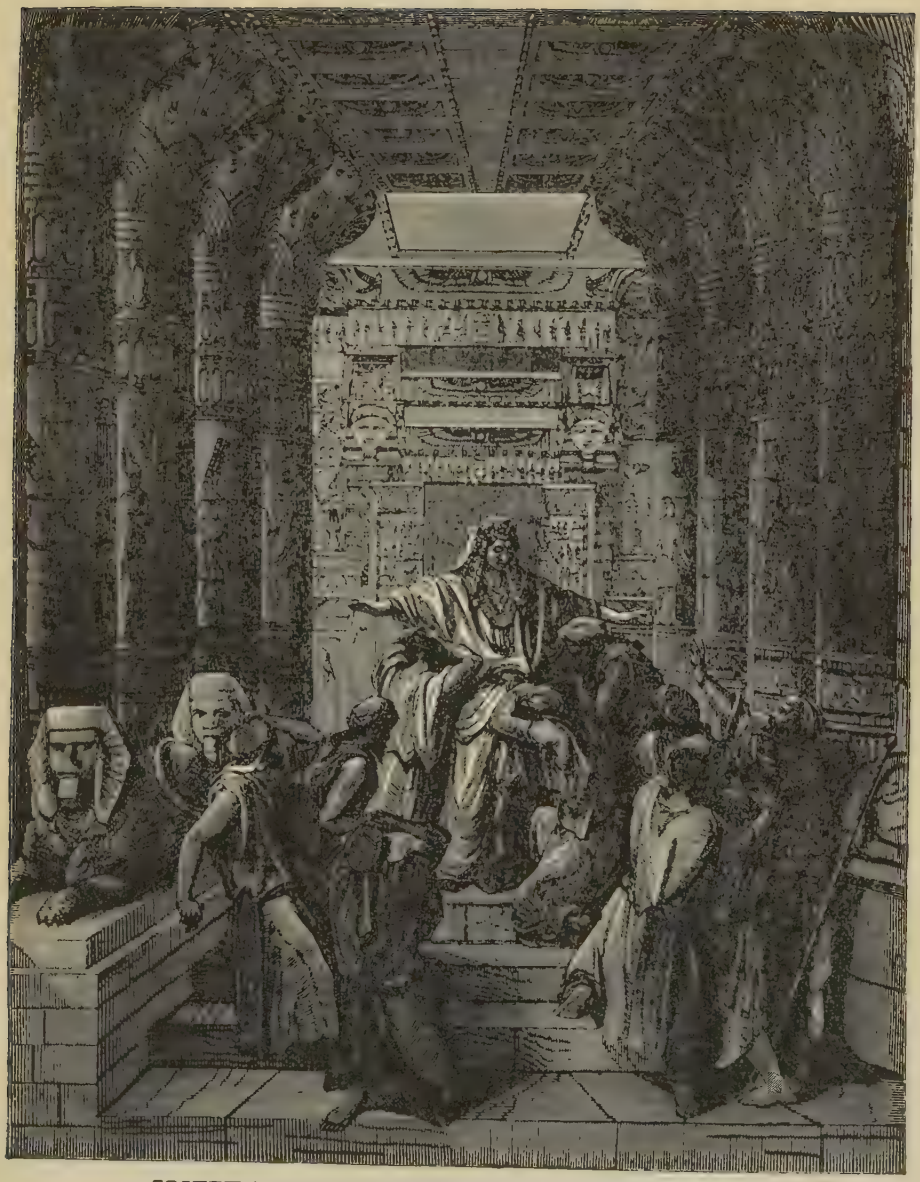
How various were the feelings of the different persons present while Judah thus earnestly appealed to the compassion of the governor! How anxiously do the other sons of Jacob watch the countenance of the judge, to see what effects their brother's eloquence are likely to produce in his mind, and how do they endeavor to read their acquittal or their condemnation in the eyes of Joseph! He, indeed, can scarcely refrain from breaking in upon the narrative which interests him so much; the artificial mound of austerity gives way; it cannot resist the rushing torrent of affection. The mighty secret must come forth; he is satisfied that his brothers are not destitute of filial and fraternal affection. All the feelings of a son and of a brother are in agitation; his whole soul expands itself towards them; and he eagerly commands the attendants to withdraw, that there may be no intruding, curious observers of the approaching scene. The Hebrews look upon one another in silent amazement, for they see that there is something important in the action and in the countenance of the viceroy. The Egyptians being withdrawn, he bursts into a flood of tears, and says, "I am Joseph: doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence."

Their silence was natural. Had their conduct to Joseph been less cruel than it was, this sudden and strange discovery of him, as the lord of Egypt, must have struck them with astonishment; but to be told that this was the very Joseph whose death they had plotted, whom they had derided and stripped, and sold for a slave, what wonder that, instead of joy and gladness, it produced fear and trouble?

But the magnanimity of Joseph was equal to his other eminent qualities. Instead of reproaching them, instead of even touching upon their unkindness towards him, he endeavored to sooth their agonized minds, and to palliate their guilt. "And he said, I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for GOD did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land; and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And GOD sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance; so now it was not you that sent me hither, but GOD."

The noble generosity of Joseph in thus casting a mantle over the fault of his brethren, and, while they were condemning themselves, to offer a plea of excuse for them, cannot be too much admired. How seldom is such conduct to be seen even among those who profess liberality of sentiment, and a regard for the doctrines of the gospel! How apt are we to remember injuries, even of a petty kind; and though we may not be disposed to revenge them, yet with what readiness do we take care that those who have offended us shall know that we bear a sense of it in our minds.

The injury Joseph had received was deep and malignant; but when he made a discovery of himself unto them, he was resolved to win his brethren's affection towards him by obliterating all sense of the evil he had experienced. And in what a beautiful spirit of piety does he endeavor to calm their minds, by showing them that the whole was of divine direction, for the preservation of themselves and their families! Their malice and envy are all overlooked, and the hand of GOD is confessed in the whole



JOSEPH DISCLOSING HIMSELF TO HIS BRETHREN.

Page 124.

of the transaction. Excellent man! How does every new situation exalt him in our esteem!

Having made this discovery of himself unto them, he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. "Moreover, he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them.

This inimitable picture is touched with exquisite skill in all its parts; and here we cannot but feel the tenderest sympathy with all the actors in this interesting scene. Joseph first embraces Benjamin, because he is the son of his mother Rachel; but he does not confine this action of fraternal love to him, he embraces all his brethren, and weeps for joy while he salutes the whole circle. When this was over, the brethren of Joseph acquired confidence, and they entered into a free conversation with him, in which the condition of their father, and of their families in Canaan, formed a principal part. It was the first care of Joseph to provide for the welfare of his relations in this time of want, and to make them partakers of his prosperity. He therefore charged his brethren to hasten homewards, and to bring down as soon as possible Jacob, and all that they had left in Canaan. "And ye shall tell my father," says he, "of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen." What, was Joseph elated with his high advancement; was he proud of being lord of all Egypt, and vainly desirous that "all his glory" should be represented to his father?

No: it was not ostentation, but dutiful concern and prudence, that made him give this charge to his brethren. Jacob might be slow to believe the marvellous tidings, and old age is reluctant to change its long accustomed situation to visit a land of strangers. Jacob had much to fear from the Egyptians, who held the Canaanites in abhorrence; and it was, therefore, not likely that he would readily be induced to undertake so hazardous and long a journey. Joseph, weighing these circumstances, directed his brethren to relate all that they had seen in Egypt, and to represent his glory to Jacob, that the venerable old man might be assured that his son possessed power sufficient to provide for and protect his family.

When Pharaoh was informed that Joseph's brethren were arrived, the generous monarch commanded him to send wagons to bring his father and all his family down to Egypt, saying, at the same time, "Regard not your stuff, for the good of the land is yours."

We cannot but admire the gratitude and condescension of this amiable king, who was superior to the narrow and superstitious prejudices of his time, and felt no uneasiness at having for a prime minister the son of a shepherd. The character of the sovereign and his servant tallied well with each other; for if the king was pleased in manifesting his regard to Joseph, by taking care of his family, Joseph was also eager to secure the favor of his master on their behalf. Some men, when they get up in the world, are apt to forget, or, at least, to shun their indigent relations. The haughty upstart, who, by some dirty means, or by a fortunate circumstance, gets into authority, and to a rank which his humble origin could hardly have augured, will lift his head high above his native dunghill, and shrink from the recollection of the persons who gave him birth.

But Joseph was too wise and too good a man to be guilty of such a criminal neglect. He was not ashamed to own his alliance to shepherds, though he knew that the occupation which they followed was held in the greatest contempt among the Egyptians.

Joseph eagerly accepted the kind commission of his sovereign, and sent a considerable train with his brethren, to whom he also gave a liberal present; but still showing a particular regard for Benjamin, by bestowing upon him a larger portion of raiment and money than upon any of the others. "And to his father he sent ten asses, laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses, laden with corn, and bread, and meat, for his father by the way."

So provident was Joseph, and attentive to the little conveniences of his father in this journey. His prudence was manifested also in the advice which he gave to his brethren when he took his leave of them: "See that ye fall not out by the way." Gen. xlv. 24. He was apprehensive that a remembrance of their past behavior might produce mutual accusations and reproaches, and he knew that the tempers of some of them were very violent, so that a serious misunderstanding might be the result.

Joseph's caution indicates an affectionate concern for the peace of his family; and a more important, impressive piece of advice could not have been given. It would be

TURKING ARABAH, DRAWN BY OXEN.

well if, in the journey of life, mankind would take the same lesson as the rule of their conduct, especially in those social relations which are essential to human happiness, but which, from the want of attending to this rule, are often imbittered with envy hatred, and malice.

ANCIENT TWO-HORSE CHARIOT.
(Designed from various Sculptures and Paintings.)

When Jacob came to the province of Goshen, the most fertile part of Egypt, Joseph hastened thither in his chariot, and a most affecting interview took place between the venerable patriarch and his dutiful, his long lost child. The exalted Hebrew next presented his brethren and his father to Pharaoh, and so far from being ashamed of them or their employment, he directed them to acknowledge their calling, that they might obtain a free grant of Goshen for their residence, in order that they might be separated from the Egyptians.

We are now to consider Joseph as a vigilant and provident statesman, in a season of peculiar distress and difficulty. The famine having continued two years, all the private stock of the Egyptians was exhausted, and, of course, they were compelled to purchase corn from the public granaries, which greatly enriched the royal treasury. As long as there was money left they bought corn of Joseph with specie, but, in the sixth year of the famine, they were obliged to sell their cattle, and, in the last year, everything being gone, they were under the necessity of selling themselves and their lands.

Joseph has been unjustly accused of promoting tyranny and slavery by this conduct; but let us look a little closely into the history and the character of these people, before we rashly encourage this charge.

Some serious rebellions had happened in Egypt before the administration of Joseph, and from a regard for Pharaoh, no less than for the people themselves, he takes this opportunity of binding them to allegiance. He wisely also adopts a method whereby the evil of famine shall be prevented in future, by taking the lands which were suffered to lie fallow, and by compelling the people who held them as vassals of the crown to turn the same into tillage. We behold here, then, a sagacious and truly benevolent line of conduct, instead of a cruel and unjust one, on the part of Joseph. By his superior wisdom the seven years of famine were provided against; nd by laying the Egyptians under the necessity of selling their lands, he obtained t power which enabled him to render the country more fruitful than it ever had

MEETING OF JACOB AND JOSEPH.

been, or indeed would be, if the inhabitants were not in a manner forced to an agricultural life. But Joseph made no undue advantage of the people's necessities, for though they exchanged all their possessions, and even their liberty for corn, he reserved only a fifth part of the land for Pharaoh, who was before the owner of a tenth of the whole, except the portion which belonged to the priests.

Again we turn to view Joseph in his private character, and still find reason to admire him as a dutiful son and a kind and forgiving brother. Seventeen years did he enjoy the pious conversation of Jacob; and when he heard that his father was sick, he hastened to visit him, taking with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

The dying beds of the righteous are awfully instructive, and are well calculated to make serious impressions on the minds of youth. Wisely, therefore, did Joseph bring his children with him, that from the lips of their venerable ancestor they might learn the true value of religion. Jacob, full of the divine Spirit, pronounced a solemn blessing upon Joseph and upon his two sons, adding, however, that the younger should have the pre-eminence over the elder; and though he was dim with age, yet, by a divine instinct, he guided his hands in such a manner as to place his right hand upon Ephraim's head, and his left upon that of Manasseh. Joseph, seeing this, was vexed, and endeavored to correct what he imagined was a mistake, but the dying prophet persisted in the action he was led to adopt.

After this he said unto Joseph, "Behold I die, but GOD shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. Moreover, I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow."

This, according to the best commentators, expresses that portion of land which Jacob bought of Hamor in Shechem, and which he afterwards retook from the Amorites, who had seized upon it in his absence.

The last scene of Jacob we have already contemplated; but here we must observe, that though the good man addressed all his sons by name in the spirit of prophecy, and delivered a striking prediction of the MESSIAH, as the Shiloh which should descend from Judah, yet it was upon Joseph that his heart rested itself with most affection. He dwelt with much delight upon the character and circumstances of his favorite son; and the language in which his blessing is expressed is highly metaphorical, elegant, and appropriate. "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty GOD of Jacob; from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel: even by the GOD of thy father, who shall help thee, and by the ALMIGHTY, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb: the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." Gen. xlix. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26.

The afflictions and the deliverances of Joseph are beautifully described under the figure of the hunted hart pursued by envy and malice! And the promise of high favor and extensive possessions to his posterity, is expressed in a rich variety of terms, to give it more weight and dignity.

When the strength of Jacob was exhausted, the lingering pulse ceased to beat, and the last breathing sigh departed, Joseph's heart was full of grief: "he fell upon his face, and wept upon him, and kissed him."

But the sorrow of Joseph, though tender, was not immoderate. He attended to the solemn charge he had received from his father, and, after the days of embalming were ended, he solicited the king's leave of absence, and went up with the dear remains to the family sepulchre in Canaan.

On his return from this pious office he had another occasion to show the generous quality of his mind. His brethren were apprehensive that the death of their common parent would bring forth the latent spirit of revenge, and that they should now experience all the vengeance of Joseph for their evil treatment of him. Their guilty consciences made them afraid, and they judged, as wicked men always do, that the mind of Joseph was like their own, prone to "recompense evil for evil." The life of their father was, according to their gloomy judgment, the only security they had against the resentment of their brother; but now that impediment is removed, they have no

MUMMY CASES AND MARBLE SARCOPHAGI.

MOURNING IN THE EAST.

doubt but that they shall be made to feel that he has neither forgotten nor forgiven them. How unjustly did they judge of the heart of Joseph! What a wrong did this guilty suspicion put upon that noble-minded man! With a creeping, mean, and humiliating petition these men sent a messenger to Joseph, supplicating his pardon, in the name of the GOD of their father. Some men would have been wonderfully gratified by this abject submission, but Joseph felt a different sensation; it grieved him to think that his brethren could entertain so base an idea of his temper and intentions. Their supplicating address brought tears into his eyes, and, when they came themselves, and fell on their faces before him, his behavior to them was noble and conciliatory. "Fear not; for am I in the place of GOD?"

Joseph possessed that trust in, and reverence for, the ALMIGHTY, as to commit all his concerns into his hands. He knew that the retribution of evil belongs to infinite justice, and is a power not to be assumed by man. "Shall I," says the pious man, "take upon me to avenge the injuries I have sustained, when I have experienced so greatly the power, protection, and goodness of GOD?"

Impressed with this pious sentiment of benevolence, he endeavors to calm the fears of his brethren, by making them an assurance of their enjoying his full favor and forgiveness. Not only so, but he does it in terms calculated to heal the festering wounds of a guilty conscience, by endeavoring to lessen the evil he had sustained, and turning it into a signal mark of providential kindness to preserve them and their families. "But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but GOD meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them." Gen. l. 20, 21.

Who can sufficiently admire the mild and tender, compassionate and pious Joseph? In him are seen all those sweet graces of religion, which an apostle calls aptly the fruits of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Gal. v. 22, 23. He buries all recollection of past injuries in oblivion, he breathes assurances, not merely of forgiveness, but affection; and he turns the minds of his brethren to the infinite and adorable JEHOVAH, as the genuine author and director of all that has happened.

Joseph lived fifty-four years after this, but the history of that period is compressed by the sacred writer within the narrow compass of a few words. He had brought Egypt through a sore trial to a great state of prosperity; he had happily been the instrument of saving his father's house from destruction, his brethren were settled in the most fertile part of the country, and he lived to see his posterity of the fourth generation, in the line of Ephraim, and of the third in that of Manasseh.

Crowned with the blessings of a considerate prince, and a grateful people, he ended his days in peace, at the age of one hundred and ten years. But gifted with the spirit of prophecy, he left a strict charge with the Israelites, that when the time should come of their deliverance from Egypt, they should take his bones with them, that they might be laid with those of his fathers. This dying charge was solemnly obeyed, and in all their journeyings through the wilderness, the Israelites carried the remains of Joseph, who saw "by faith" the subjugation and glorious emancipation of the tribes.

In this history we perceive the advantage of early piety and habitual integrity. Joseph's life is a beautiful lesson of instruction and encouragement to young persons to resist temptation, to have GOD, or a sense of the divine presence, always before them, to be diligent in their callings, affectionate in their social relations, calm and contented in a low sphere, faithful in offices of trust, and to be humble and devout in every station of their lives.

But can we contemplate the history of Joseph, and not perceive a striking similitude between his circumstances and those of the Son of GOD? His future exaltation was prefigured in supernatural visions of the night;—the incarnation, sufferings, and ascension of the MESSIAH were veiled under the shadowy representations of the law, represented in mystic rites and ceremonies, and foretold by prophecies and signs in abundance. Joseph was a mark of envy to his brethren, and JESUS came to his own, "who received him not."

The brothers of Joseph cast him into a pit, and plotted his death, but were prevented by the interposition of Heaven. JESUS actually did suffer pain and mocking, agony and death, at the instance and the clamors of his brethren the Jews. Joseph was sold

for money by the avaricious advice of Judah—and Judas, the disciple of the LORD, sold his Master's innocent blood into the hands of his enemies for thirty pieces of silver.

The virtuous patriarch was tempted in the house of Potiphar, by the most dangerous solicitations to sin, in the prime of his days, but he prevailed. JESUS endured temptation on the mountain, in the wilderness, and on the pinnacle of the temple, but came off more than conqueror, foiling the arch-adversary of mankind, and leading him into captivity.

Joseph, in prison, meek and submissive, diligent and faithful, typifies the lowly REDEEMER in all the steps of his degradation and suffering. But from a dungeon we have seen the pious youth elevated suddenly to the right hand of a throne, and possessing the government of all Egypt. JESUS, the meek, suffering Lamb of GOD, was "numbered with the transgressors," and died as a malefactor, but from the gloomy chambers of the grave he arose in triumphant majesty, he burst the adamantine chains of death, he disarmed the tyrant of his sting, he ascended up on high, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of GOD, having all power both in heaven and upon earth. By Joseph's care and wise contrivance the nations around, as well as the Egyptians, were preserved in a time of grievous famine. Our divine REDEEMER hath procured for us all blessings temporal and spiritual. He is himself the bread of life which came down from heaven, and he gives unto every believing, repenting sinner, food of a divine nature, pardon, forgiveness, grace, and glory.

JOB.

SUPPOSED TO HAVE DIED IN THE YEAR OF THE WORLD, 2512.

THE volumes of history are filled with instances of the mutability of fortune. Affliction is a school in which, though the discipline is severe, more benefit may be acquired than in those situations which are generally courted by mankind. Pleasure and prosperity have a tendency to corrupt the heart, and to call forth its evil passions into action; but adversity is calculated to bring us to our senses, to mortify vanity and pride, to make us serious, submissive, and devout. When we experience the loss of riches, friends, honors, or health, we can scarcely help condemning our want of discernment in placing an undue affection upon perishable objects. If this thought is cherished as it ought to be, and is carried into a train of considerate inquiry, we shall be convinced that this world was not intended to be our portion, and that all its boasted good is inadequate to satisfy the desires of an immortal spirit. In the sacred records we are presented with a variety of striking examples, to convince us that crosses and disappointments are wisely directed by Providence for this purpose, that man may learn not to expect happiness in the creature, but in the CREATOR; not on earth, but in heaven.

The story of Job is an instructive picture, from the contemplation of which many important truths may be gathered; on the use that is to be made of the world, on the design of affliction, and on the temper of mind which afflictions ought to produce.

Concerning the age and country in which this eminent person lived, there are numerous conjectures. As there are in this book no allusions to the deliverance of the Israelites, or to any part of the Mosaic ritual, it is probable that Job lived in the patriarchal times, or at least that he died before the departure of the chosen people from the house of bondage. He is said to have lived "in the land of Uz," or Edom, which country obtained that name from Uz, the son of Dishan, the son of Seir the Horite, and therefore it seems evident that Job was a descendant of Esau. Hence some have supposed that he was the same with Jobab, the second king of the Edomites. Gen. xxxvi. 33. There are also different opinions as to the author of the book of Job, but the current one is, that it was composed by Moses while he led a pastoral life in Midian; and certainly it was well calculated to console the minds of his afflicted brethren in Egypt, and to preserve them from giving way through despondency to idolatry or despair.

There have not been wanting some bold commentators, who have turned this whole history into a parable or allegory, and upon equally good principles might they have allegorized the story of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, or of Joseph. The Scriptures speak of Job as of a real person, not only in the book which bears his name, but in other places, as in the prophecy of Ezekiel, (Ezek. xiv. 14,) and in the epistle of St. James. James v. 11.

It would tend to lessen the importance of the character, to weaken our admiration, and to remove the force of the example of Job, if we were for a single moment to admit that he is but the creature of fancy, and designed to represent the state of the Jewish people in bondage, or an afflicted good man in a general sense.

To profit as we ought to do by this affecting narrative, we must receive it as a fact, that he "was a man of the land of Uz, perfect and upright, one that feared GOD, and eschewed evil."

The manner in which he is introduced to our notice commands our love and veneration. In a few emphatic words his character bursts upon us as that of a star of the first magnitude in the moral world. He was "a perfect and an upright man," comparatively speaking, for in an absolute sense no man is perfect and upright. The perfection and uprightness of Job, therefore, must imply that his religion was sincere, and that his conduct was conformable to his principles. A man may profess pure doctrines, and he may recommend piety in his language, while his manner of life gives the lie to his declarations, and it will be seen that what he pretends to believe has no sort of influence upon his own actions. Job not only believed in and worshipped GOD, but "he eschewed evil," by shunning, with pious abhorrence, all communication with the wicked, and with the works of darkness. A hatred of sin is the most striking evidence that can possibly be given of our love of holiness. It is vain to talk of religion, of the fear of GOD, and of the excellence of his revelation, if we do not manifest the sincerity of our faith by renouncing the company of sinners, and by avoiding all appearance of evil.

The circumstances of Job show the purity of his character in the most brilliant light. When a man sits at his ease, having everything at his command, possessed of riches in abundance, and vested with high authority, he is surrounded with proportionate temptations. The condition of Job was great in each of these respects; he was exceedingly rich in flocks and herds, and surpassed "all the men of the east;" he was, besides, possessed of great power in the country where he lived; and he was regarded with reverence "by the young and the old, by nobles and by princes."

He enjoyed all that could be wished for in this world; for with a large estate he had a considerable household himself, besides seven sons and three daughters, who were settled near him, in the most affluent circumstances, and who lived in mutual harmony and good-will.

Temporal ease and prosperity are but too apt to produce indifference to religion, if not positive licentiousness and infidelity. But Job, in the midst of his greatness, remembered GOD, and failed not in fulfilling those devotional duties which became him as the head of a numerous family. When his children were feasting at each other's houses, the good man trembled lest, in the height of enjoyment, they might be guilty of any irreligious conduct, and therefore, as the priest of his household, he offered sacrifices of atonement on their behalf, "according to the number of them all." This was his constant practice; and he was equally attentive to those private devotions and duties which are necessary to keep up an habitual fervor of piety in the soul; for he says himself, "In the days when GOD preserved me, his candle shined upon my head, [a beautiful expression, representing his sense of the divine favor,] and by his light I walked through darkness. The secret of GOD was upon my tabernacle; the ALMIGHTY was with me." Job xxix. 3, 4.

Here we behold a man of the most exalted rank, and enjoying immense riches, placing all his happiness in the enjoyment of GOD's favor, walking in a dark and idolatrous age by the light of divine truth, and feeling no satisfaction in any other consideration than this, that "the ALMIGHTY was with him."

What a contrast does holy Job present to the dignified and wealthy men of modern times, who, against the purest precepts, and notwithstanding the clearest discovery of the divine will, encourage their families in dissipation and immorality, discourage, by their own example, all regard for religion, and make use of the powerful means they possess, not in promoting virtue and piety, but profaneness and infidelity!

The outward walk and conversation of Job corresponded with his private deportment. He was not contented with feeling pious sentiments, and with practising family religion; his public situation required the discharge of active duties, and his great wealth laid him under a necessity of attending to the wants and miseries of his fellow-creatures. Job was sensible of this essential truth, that religion must be proved by action as well as by appearance and professions.

The higher ranks are but "stewards of the manifold gifts of GOD," and Job was abundantly sensible that he had all these blessings committed to him, not for his use alone, but for the comfort and benefit of the miserable and distressed.

When, therefore, in the mysterious ordination of Providence, he was himself hurled

from a palace to a dunghill, and reduced to the most pitiable of all conditions, it was a consolation to him to reflect that his wealth had not been misapplied. On the contrary, he could with honest boldness reply to the false charges which were brought against him this noble vindication: "I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him; the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy: I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgment was as a robe and a diadem: I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame: I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not I searched out: and I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth." Job xxix. 12—17. "Did I not weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the poor?" Job xxx. 25. "I have not withheld the poor from their desire, nor have caused the eyes of the widow to fail: I have not eaten my morsel myself alone, but the fatherless hath eaten thereof: (for from my youth he was brought up with me as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb:) I have not seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; but his loins have blessed me, and he was warmed with the fleece of my sheep." Job xxxi. 16—20.

We have here not only the man of sympathetic benevolence, "who could weep with those who wept," and who could express a tender sorrow for the cause of their grief, but also the man of active generosity, who could distribute his substance with a liberal hand to the poor and the destitute of all descriptions, without waiting to receive their prayer and supplication. His house was an asylum to the widow and the fatherless; and he approved himself a generous defender of those who were injured and oppressed. As a ruler he was not content with merely discharging his public duty, but he interested himself with pious care and pains on the behalf of the poor. If a cause appeared difficult and perplexed, he endeavored to "search it out," or to divest it of all ambiguity, in order that strict justice might be administered.

Such a character cannot be too highly estimated; and wherever one of a similar description is placed by Providence, a public blessing is bestowed, for which no praises can be adequate.

Who, then, would not wish to see such a man as Job enjoying an uninterrupted series of prosperity? Who would not be painfully concerned at beholding a man of such exemplary righteousness the sport of calamity, and reduced to beggary?

But here it is that we have reason to admire him still more. His integrity cannot be proved fully but by his passing through the fire of adversity. And Providence, in the history of Job, has given to all generations a manifest proof that great afflictions are not marks of divine displeasure, but that severe visitations may sometimes befall the righteous in mercy, as well as the wicked in judgment.

Job is declared to be the favorite of GOD, for "in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." Acts x. 35.

The attestation of the ALMIGHTY to Job's sincerity is very remarkable; for it appears to have been directed to Satan, the original deceiver of mankind.

The holy angels are described as presenting themselves before GOD, to give an account of their respective missions; and Satan, the agent of evil, appears also, on this occasion, before the awful tribunal. Nothing more is hereby to be understood than that divine Providence overrules all orders of beings, and that the evil spirits themselves, who are actuated by a blind perversity against Heaven, are, nevertheless, restrained and directed in their operations to effect the plan of general good. While the prince of darkness with his numerous legions are busily employed in counteracting the divine counsels, in producing new scenes of corruption and turbulence, in aiding the wicked devices of the cruel and the ambitious, and in persecuting and tempting the virtuous and godly, the unerring Lord of all turns the evil ultimately to another purpose, causes the crafty to be caught in their own snares, and "makes all things work together for good to them that love GOD." Rom. viii. 28.

The Ruler of the universe, seated upon his throne, beholding the rebellious leader of the fallen hosts amongst the myriads of spirits who crowded to attend upon his will, singles him out from all the rest, and puts this question to him: "From whence comest thou?"

The audacious spirit replied without hesitation, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

This is the condition in which Satan is uniformly described in every part of the holy

writings. We have here an express declaration that the tempter ranges in this world practising, as far as he is permitted, his evil acts upon mankind. In the gospel the same thing is expressly maintained, and various instances of his operations are plainly recorded. To doubt, therefore, of his actual existence, or to assert that Satan is only a personification of moral evil, is to commit an unwarrantable violation upon common language, and to reduce the Scripture history at once to the darkest uncertainty.

The character and the circumstances of the devil are clearly expressed in the records of truth, and we are cautioned against his devices, because "he goeth about in darkness as a lion, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Pet. v. 8.

And why should we doubt his reality? Is there anything more improbable in the existence of evil angels than of good ones? Or is such a distinction more inconsistent than that which we see prevails among our own species, of wicked and good men? We have innumerable instances recorded of the visible appearance and the wonderful interposition of the blessed spirits, who are declared to be "ministers unto them that are the heirs of salvation." Heb. i. 14. But are we to deny their existence and their ministration, because we are not able to form an idea of a spirit, because we cannot disengage our thoughts from material objects, and because no special evidence has been manifested to us of the invisible world?

What is above us may be as incomprehensible, as varied, and as innumerable, as what is below us in the scale of being. We are assured that there are countless and imperceptible tribes of living creatures far below the standard of humanity, and how are we capable of knowing what hosts of spiritual intelligences exist above us? If we take the BIBLE for the rule of our faith, we cannot entertain a doubt of the existence and agency of spiritual beings, some willingly engaged in the service of the ALMIGHTY, and ready to exercise all good offices on the behalf of mankind; and others, from a malicious spirit of revenge, ever eager to cross his designs, and to lead men into error and destruction. Repeated and very particular cautions are given us to beware of the machinations of the apostate spirits, who are the enemies of our salvation; and then, by way of encouragement, we are assured that the good angels are actively employed on our side, ready to render us every necessary service, to check the intrusions of the adversary, to encourage every virtuous principle, and as being always ready to "rejoice over one sinner that repenteth." Luke xv. 10.

We return from this digression to the colloquy which is represented as having taken place between GOD and Satan, upon the character of Job. As soon as the tempter had given his answer respecting what had been his employment, the ALMIGHTY, seemingly in allusion to the general corruption and depravity that prevailed in the world, said to him, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth GOD, and escheweth evil?" Job. i. 8.

Satan is sometimes called the god of this world, from the number of his votaries; and at that period his power and influence were vastly extensive, almost the whole earth being covered with idolatry. This reach of influence, and his consequent arrogance, may perhaps be implied by his ranging to and fro in the earth, and his appearing audaciously before GOD with the obedient angels. He seems to have exulted in the power which he possessed, though he was presently forced to acknowledge his impotence, in not being able to do the slightest injury to Job without divine permission.

In reply to the demand of the ALMIGHTY, he charges Job at once with being a hypocrite, whose religion was the mere consequence of his prosperity. "Doth Job," says he, "fear GOD for naught?" It is observable that the accusations brought by the emissaries of evil against the righteous have been always of the same stamp in every age. It is Satan's wish to make men hypocrites, and when he finds that their integrity is proof against all his artillery, he contrives to have them stigmatized among men, as bearing the very character which he has in vain attempted to make them.

Satan represents Job as a man without any real regard for GOD, and one who would readily curse him to his face, if he were once deprived of all his temporal goods. The ALMIGHTY was well acquainted with the sincerity of his servant's piety, and needed not any trial to convince him of it; but, for the sake of Job himself, for the service of the church, and to mortify the adversary, he gave him this permission: "Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand."

With this authority Satan goes forth from the divine presence, and presently puts all his engines in motion against the righteous Job, managing them with peculiar dexterity, in order to destroy his integrity and confidence in GOD.

A series of unparalleled calamities pours in upon the holy sufferer, so that before he can have time to compose himself under the shock of one afflicting piece of intelligence, another and another succeeds in the most rapid and terrifying order.

While his sons and his daughters were feasting at their eldest brother's house, and every one was off his guard, the Sabeans fell upon the oxen and the asses, and slew

WILD ASS.

all the servants, except the bearer of the mournful tale. The unfortunate messenger was yet relating the particulars of the disaster when another rushed in, almost breathless, and informed Job that the lightning had fallen from heaven and consumed all the sheep, with his fellow-servants who kept them. The news of this fearful visitation has scarcely reached his ears before another messenger enters, and tells him that the Chaldeans had seized upon all the camels, and had slain the other servants with the edge of the sword. Thus, then, at a stroke, is the richest man in the East reduced on a level with the lowest of his dependants. The affluent and generous Job is become a beggar. But then in this sudden privation of all his riches, he is beginning to console himself, perhaps, that he has children—when suddenly appears an affrighted messenger, who, with a death-like horror in his countenance, proclaims the fatal intelligence, that while "his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, behold there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." Job i. 18, 19.

What a climax of miseries is here, and how dreadfully do they pour one upon another, rushing with an impetuous fury, like the crash of contending elements, upon the senses of Job, without leaving him a single moment of interval to collect his disturbed spirits, and call upon his GOD! But the last particular in this dismal picture of wo is peculiarly distressing, and is aggravating in all its circumstances. The loss of riches may be borne with. The mind of a man may support itself under the intelligence of a violent shipwreck, in which all his property has been whelmed in the mighty deep; but when to this weight of misfortune the sudden destruction of his whole family is added, and that "his sons and his daughters" have been swept away by a single stroke, it is more than human nature, unaided by divine grace, can bear. Here, however, was a dreadful addition to Job's misery, for his children were not only taken off suddenly, but in the midst of mirth and jolity, in the gay moment of festive

WHIRLWIND.

enjoyment, and perhaps of intemperance, certainly not in that serious frame of mind which one would wish a friend to possess in his last moments. Job, we have already seen, had the most tender concern lest, at these entertainments, his children should be guilty of impiety, and took care to sanctify them, by offering sacrifices on their behalf; what now, therefore, must be his feelings, on hearing that "in the midst of their wine and their mirth," they were all swept off together into eternity!

An excess of grief might bear an excuse in a case of misery so complicated as this. Human nature is weak and irritable, and the best of men cannot but be sensibly affected by the heavy stroke of calamity.

Were we, then, to see Job, after this weight of trouble, fallen upon the earth in silent horror, or in exquisite agony, we should certainly not condemn, but apologize for and pity him.

But while he calls for our sympathy, he attracts our admiration and even our astonishment. The good man bore the relation of his several losses in patient silence, till the destruction of his family closed the direful catalogue, and then he "arose, rent his mantle." according to the custom of the age, "shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped."

The holy sufferer patiently submitted to the awful dispensations of Providence with an acknowledgment that all the blessings he had lost were originally given to him by the ALMIGHTY, who, therefore, had an unquestionable right to withdraw them at his pleasure. "Naked I came out of my mother's womb," says he, "and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." Job i. 21.

It is easy to express gratitude for the bounties of Heaven, when they are showering upon us; but it is the height of faith, and the essence of piety, to be thankful for blessings we have lost, and to praise GOD in the fire of affliction.

Satan in this onset was baffled. The integrity of Job remained unshaken in all this storm, and his confidence in the ALMIGHTY stood firm when his worldly comforts were all torn up by the roots. "In all this Job sinned not, neither charged he GOD foolishly."

But he must undergo yet sorer trials. The tempter, bent upon his malicious purpose, maintains, in a second conference with GOD, that Job's integrity is not proof against the loss of health. "Skin for skin," says he, "yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life: but put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face." Job ii. 4.

He thought that pain and anguish must produce unbelieving thoughts, because he judged the state of others' minds by his own. Satan is doomed to eternal restlessness and torment, being wholly cut off from all hope of a return to happiness. He is, therefore, at perpetual enmity with GOD, and when men are visited with excruciating maladies, he suggests to them the base idea that they are unjustly dealt with, that the ALMIGHTY is tyrannical, that his dispensations are unequal, and that the doctrine of Providence, with all its consequences, is but a fable.

It is no easy thing to preserve an evenness of mind when the body is racked with pain, or pining away through weakness. There is a close connexion between the mental faculties and the corporeal, consequently when the one are greatly affected the others cannot be unmoved. The spirit of evil, knowing this to be his great resource, reserved it for the last. One calamity succeeded another in painful succession, each rising in magnitude over the preceding, till nothing but one dismal scene of horror was presented to the mind of Job. Now, therefore, is the time, in the midst of all this darkness, to come to a closer attack, and to assail him in his person. But Satan dares not do this without the divine permission. Though his range is wide, and his instruments are potent, he can go no farther than he is allowed, nor can he touch a single hair of our heads without the leave of the ALMIGHTY.

In this conflict Satan was destined to experience a severe mortification; and Job to receive, notwithstanding the malice of his enemy, everlasting renown.

The adversary received an enlargement of his powers, and instantly he poured out his vengeance upon the person of Job, who was covered "with sore biles, from the sole of his foot unto the crown of his head." Job ii. 7.

Many conjectures have been formed on the subject of the disease with which this eminent man was visited. But who can pretend to ascertain the nature of what was evidently supernatural? He was not afflicted with any of the complaints which were common in that age, nor is there anything in the account which is given of his case

DESOLATION OF JOB

that can lead to a positive decision. It was a malady far above human skill, and so intolerable as to drive from him all human assistance. In this wretched state he sat "down among the ashes, and took himself a potsherd to scrape himself withal."

We may form some faint idea of the miserable condition of Job from his own mournful language and pathetic complaints. "The arrows of the ALMIGHTY are within me; the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of GOD do set themselves against me." Job vi. 4. "When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? And I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day. My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken and become loathsome." Job vii. 4, 5. "My bones are pierced in me in the night season, and my sinews take no rest. By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat." Job xxx. 17, 18.

In the time of sickness we naturally look for the consolations of friendship, and for the dutiful attentions of domestics, but Job is cut off from all this: "My brethren," says he, "are far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me. They that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: and I am an alien in their sight. I called my servant, and he gave me no answer; I entreated him with my mouth." Job xix. 13, 14, 15, 16.

The persons who had been partakers of his prosperity, who had been rescued from poverty by his liberal hand, and those who had been fed by his bounty, who ate their daily bread at his expense, now shunned and despised him as a miserable outcast, undeserving of compassion. In some places he speaks as being "persecuted," and that too by men who were formerly his bosom friends. Instead of experiencing pity and receiving consolation from them, he was abhorred as a man suffering under the divine displeasure, and therefore as not entitled to the common offices of humanity.

But in all this accumulation of misery, one might well expect that the "wife of his bosom" would feel a sympathetic concern for his sufferings, and endeavor to pour some balm into his wounded mind, although she might not be able to alleviate his bodily torments. Here, however, Job was fated to receive a wound more deadly than that inflicted by the adder's tooth. His wife, instead of administering comfort to him in his distress, or by a tender solicitude easing the agony of his mind, aggravated his misery by advice calculated to answer the purpose of the devil. "Dost thou still retain thine integrity?" says she: "Curse GOD, and die." Job ii. 9.

Though the word rendered *curse* signifies also to *bless*, yet the evil meaning of the speaker is not hereby removed. The former sense implies something very shocking and impious; and if she advised Job to blaspheme GOD, it was from a conviction that by so doing the vengeance of Heaven would instantly deprive him of his existence. By rendering it "bless GOD and die," it reduces her speech to an ironical contempt of Job's faith and piety. In either case her counsel was offensive to the distressed, but still religious patriarch. "He said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh? what! shall we receive good at the hand of GOD, and shall we not also receive evil?"

The confidence of Job in the goodness of GOD continues firm in all this complication of misery, in the privation of worldly good, the persecutions of men, the cruel neglect of his dependants, and the sinful advice of his wife.

We here see that object which a heathen philosopher says is "worthy the contemplation of the gods," a man enduring all the calamities of life with a firm and an unshaken mind.

In this wretched condition the pious sufferer was visited by three friends from distant parts, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, all of them men of piety, and zealous for the honor of the ALMIGHTY. When they first came to the spot where he lay, his loathsome disease had so disfigured his person, that they did not know him. So great and lamentable a change in one of such high rank and of such eminent virtue very sensibly affected their hearts, "and they lifted up their voice and wept." Job ii. 12.

These men sat down upon the ground near Job, and continued in a state of pensive silence seven days and seven nights. They knew not what kind of consolation to suggest, and they saw that the wretched sufferer was literally "eat up with excessive grief." At last that patient endurance, which had so long distinguished him, gave way. His disease probably became more and more excruciating, till at length the mind fel-

JOB AND HIS FRIENDS. (From a modern French picture in the Luxembourg.)

the weight too great to bear, and Job gave vent to his sorrow in some passionate exclamations. He did not, it is true, charge GOD foolishly; he did not express any profane sentiment, or impeach the divine rectitude; but his impatience was manifested in "cursing the day of his birth," and in an importunate desire of death.

After pouring forth the most pathetic lamentations, his three friends severally addressed him in some very fine discourses, full of pious sentiments, and clothed in elevated language. But there was a want of tenderness and liberality in these good men during the whole of their controversy with Job, whom they reproved with great severity for his passionate exclamations, and unjustly accused of heinous offences. It was their error, and it is even now a very common one, that great misfortunes and calamities are divine judgments. They conceived it impossible that the ALMIGHTY would visit an innocent person with such severe dispensations; and they therefore rashly concluded that Job, with all his outward piety, must have been guilty of some very atrocious crimes, and consequently that his religion was mere pretence and hypocrisy.

Job, roused by such unjust charges, vindicated himself in a very powerful and affecting manner; but it must be admitted that in his apologies, if we may so call them, he blended too much self-righteousness, and talked of his innocence and his uprightness with too great a confidence. He dwelt upon his virtuous actions, and upon his religious life, with a complacency that ill becomes man, who, in his best and most sanctified state, is still but a sinner.

While this dispute was vigorously maintained, a very extraordinary young man, named Elihu, attended with great seriousness to all the arguments that were urged on both sides: but, when the debate was ended, he modestly interposed as a moderator, reproving by turns Job and his friends, and vindicating, in the most convincing manner, and in the most elegant language, the ways of Providence. Though possessed of more wisdom than any of the sages before him, he commences his discourse in terms of respectful diffidence, conscious that the young, however knowing they may be, ought to listen with reverence, and to speak with modesty in the presence of the aged. "I am young," says he, "and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not show you mine opinion. I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom." Job xxxii. 6, 7. What an excellent pattern for our imitation, and especially for young persons, who, instead of listening with earnest attention to the opinions of elder and wiser men than themselves, are but too forward to take the chair of instruction, and to oppose the crude theories of inexperience to the tried principles of wisdom.

But there is a zeal which becomes even the young, when it proceeds from the sincere love of truth, and not from a principle of ostentation.

When Elihu saw that Job's friends persisted in condemning him without a cause, he was angry with them; nor was he less so with Job for justifying himself rather than GOD, who doeth righteously.

His preliminary observation, that "great men are not always wise, neither do the aged understand judgment," is convincing, and furnishes an unanswerable apology for interfering in this interesting debate.

The age and rank of Job's visiters rendered their errors the more dangerous, and it was, therefore, of consequence that the true doctrine of Providence should be set in a clear light. Elihu undertook this important cause, professing, at the same time, that he acted under the influence of the HOLY SPIRIT, and that his concern for the truth was superior to all respect for particular men. "I know not," says he, "to give flattering titles; in so doing my MAKER would soon take me away." Job xxxii. 22.

As Job was by far the most interested in this important question, Elihu addresses himself directly to him; and, in a strain of the most captivating and powerful eloquence, proves that the ways of the ALMIGHTY, though dark and mysterious, are perfectly just. He endeavors, also, with a forcible energy of argument, to convince him of his great error in setting up a plea of merit for the justification of himself, and for having uttered these unbecoming words; "I am clean, without transgression; neither is there iniquity in me."

It is the great drift of this admirable speaker to beat down the wretched delusion, that man can possibly render himself acceptable to GOD, or, in other words, can be justified by virtue of his own works. He does not dispute the point so much agitated by the others, whether Job really was a *just* or a *righteous* man. Admitting this fact to its greatest extent, Job must still be considered as highly culpable for justifying himself rather than, or without, GOD.

This was the great fault of the sufferer, and it was in a great measure to bring him out of so dangerous an error, that these severe visitations were permitted to take place.

The reasoning of Elihu had its effect upon Job, for he made no reply to it, as he had done to the discourses of his three friends. Their arguments only served to irritate his wounded mind; but those of Elihu opened his eyes to an humbling sense of himself as a sinner before GOD. Elihu, at the close of his sublime discourse, seems thus to announce the approach of the divine presence, and the finishing of Job's troubles: "And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds; but the wind passeth and cleanseth them. Fair weather cometh out of the north: with GOD is terrible majesty. Touching the ALMIGHTY, we cannot find him out; he is excellent in power and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict. Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart." Job xxxvii. 21, &c.

And now GOD himself appears, and takes a part in the controversy, confirming what had been asserted of the wisdom and rectitude of his ways by Elihu, and illustrating the whole by such a display of his attributes, that Job is convinced of his folly, and humbles himself before the LORD in these penitential words: "Behold I am vile: what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further." Job xl. 4, 5. He afterwards expresses his contrition in still more humiliating terms: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and asnes." Job xlii. 5, 6.

At the conclusion the ALMIGHTY reproves the friends of Job, for not speaking of him the thing that was right, but no observation is made upon the discourse of Elihu, because his counsel to the sufferer to humble himself as a sinner before the LORD, and to acknowledge the rectitude of the divine proceedings towards him, was good.

The great end of Job's sufferings being over, which was to purge away the dross that mingled itself with his religious principles, his "captivity was turned," and the sun of prosperity once more shone upon his head. The ALMIGHTY restored him twofold more than what he had lost, so that "his latter end was more than his beginning." His friends flocked round him with presents in their hands, bemoaning and comforting him "over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him." Job xlii. 11.

His wife also became fruitful, and brought him the same number of children as he had lost, "and in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brethren."

The age of this tried servant of GOD was, moreover, extended to the long period of two hundred and ten years, one hundred and forty of which more than compensated for the time he was suffered to be in the furnace of affliction. He had the satisfaction of seeing "his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations," and "then died, being old and full of days."

In the story of Job we are presented not only with an admirable pattern for our imitation, though shaded with the weaknesses of human nature, but also with a beautiful illustration of the economy of GOD's moral government. We see here, likewise, the power of temptation, and the extent to which the agency of evil spirits may be carried. The insufficiency of human reason to account for divine dispensations, is proved in the erroneous conclusions of Job's three friends; and the necessity of an absolute submission to the will of GOD, is the striking lesson inculcated throughout the whole book.

Job was not a perfect model for the imitation of the tried believer; but his example may be considered with great advantage; and if we had not another pattern in the sacred volume, Job's would be the first to engage our attention, as an illustration of the great virtue of religious resignation. But a far higher character than Job shines forth in the gospel. JESUS CHRIST endured greater temptations and sufferings than this pious Arabian; but "though he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth." His most pathetic complaint was, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" but he immediately recovered his fortitude, and added, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Matt. xxvi. 39.

Was Job deprived of all his worldly possessions? The MESSIAH voluntarily resigned a throne of celestial glory and the majesty of heaven to endure poverty, suffering, wretchedness, persecution, and even death itself, for us men and for our salvation. The family and friends of Job abandoned him in the day of his visitation, but our

LORD "came unto his own, and his own received him not;" (John i. 11;) he had "not where to lay his head;" (Matt. viii. 20;) he was betrayed by the perfidy of one disciple, denied by the cowardice of another, and forsaken by all. He was lacerated with cruel scourges, his hands and feet were pierced with rugged irons, and his head was mangled with a crown of thorns. All the complainings of Job might literally have been adopted by him, but he murmured not, neither did a single expression of complaint burst from his lips. "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." Isaiah liii. 7.

Job pleaded his integrity, and set up a false claim to righteousness, which, however, he soon saw reason to renounce when the LORD arose in judgment. But the patient Lamb of GOD was spotless, and when he was tried there was no imperfection found in him. "He suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto GOD." 1 Pet. iii. 18. His was a voluntary sacrifice offered up to divine justice, to bring in everlasting righteousness for sinful men. He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, that we might live for ever through him. To this great atonement all the believers of old looked with faith and expectation; and this it was which supported Job in his trial; "I know," saith he, "that my REDEEMER liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see GOD: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

Animated by a like faith, we shall be enabled to resist the fiery assaults of our great adversary, and to endure the storms of adversity with calm and unshaken minds. Faith in the divine promises will support the Christian in every trying visitation, and give him such a degree of superiority over the world, that, while others are impatient under the yoke, he will "rejoice in the LORD, and joy in the GOD of his salvation." Hab. iii. 18.

MOSES.

BORN IN THE YEAR OF THE WORLD, 2433; DIED, 2555.

S long as the memory of Joseph was held by the Egyptians in veneration, as that of the saviour of their country, his family were permitted to reside among them without molestation: but no sooner did "a king arise who knew not Joseph," (Exod. i. 8,) than the Israelites were regarded, both by him and his people, with a jealous eye. So short-lived is public gratitude, and of such slimy materials consists what the world dignifies with the epithets of honor and renown.

It is not to be inferred that because this Pharaoh, which was the titular name of the Egyptian kings, "knew not Joseph," he was, therefore, ignorant of the great services of that illustrious statesman. The public records of the nation had doubtless consecrated the name of Zaphnath-Paaneah, and the prosperous condition of the colony in Goshen could not but excite an inquiry into the time and occasion of their first settlement in that province. It is not reasonable to suppose that the lapse of about seventy years should obliterate all recollection of the splendid administration of Joseph, and of that awful visitation of Providence, which, but for his foresight and wisdom, would have desolated Egypt, as it did the neighboring countries. Had the record of this event been left to mere tradition alone, it could not have sunk into oblivion for some ages at least; of course, the extraordinary manner in which the evil was provided against, must have been preserved with the memorial of the dearth itself.

In this view of the case, the ingratitude of the Egyptians towards the relations of their great deliverer cannot be too strongly reprobated; and the conduct of this Pharaoh, who knew not Joseph, has stamped eternal infamy upon his name.

Observing that the peaceful shepherds in Goshen flourished exceedingly, and that their numbers were upon the increase, Pharaoh began to entertain apprehensions of danger from them, lest, in the event of a war, they should prove powerful auxiliaries to his enemies, or seize the favorable opportunity of emigrating into the country whence their ancestors originally came.

Under the impression of these ideas, Pharaoh calls together his council, and proposes to them what he terms "a wise measure;" (Exod. i. 10;) for evil minds always reckon wisdom and artifice as the same thing. A virtuous and considerate prince would have regarded the Hebrew colony as a valuable accession to his empire, and, while they continued peaceable and industrious, he would never have thought of removing them from their pastoral and agricultural employments, much less of reducing them to a state of abject slavery. But Pharaoh conceived himself insecure as long as this separate body of men retained the most fertile province in his dominions; and though from their skill and industry his kingdom was strengthened and enriched, he formed the resolution of sacrificing certain advantages to prevent chimerical evil.

The courtiers readily acceded to the proposal of their master; and the Israelites were forced to quit their flocks and their herds to labor in public works, under rigorous task-masters, who afflicted them with heavy burdens.

A considerable portion of avarice mixed itself with the other bad qualities of Pharaoh; and as a proof that this was his predominating passion, we are told that this persecuted people were employed to "build for him two treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses."

It was one part of Pharaoh's design, in this oppression, to prevent the farther increase of the Hebrew nation: but Providence counteracted his purpose; and though the task-masters executed their orders with a rigor that exactly comported with the spirit of their employer, yet the more "they afflicted them, the more the people multiplied and grew."

This served to irritate the gloomy mind of the tyrant into a diabolical hatred; and he formed the horrid resolution of rooting out this hated people, by causing all their male children to be put to death as soon as born.

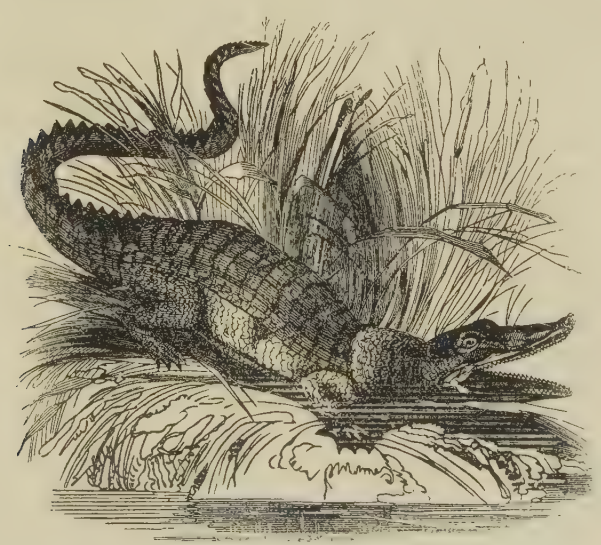
The sanguinary edict was accordingly issued; and the Hebrew midwives were commanded, on pain of death, to put it into execution. But these pious women, fearing God more than they did the king, disobeyed the order; and when they were called to account for so doing, their excuse was, that the Hebrew women were more robust than those of Egypt, and seldom had occasion for their assistance.

Pharaoh, however, was not to be diverted from his purpose, and therefore issued a mandate to his subjects to cast all the male children that should be born to the Hebrews into the river Nile.

To what extent this abominable decree was carried we are not informed, for the sacred writer just relates the circumstance, in order to introduce the most signal instance of providential deliverance that is to be found in history.

Amram and Jochebed, two pious Israelites, of the tribe of Levi, had two children, Miriam and Aaron, before this bloody edict was proclaimed, at which period Jochebed was in daily expectation of being delivered of another child.

That expectation, which usually sweetens pain and suffering at these seasons, must now have been converted into fear and terror, lest the fruit of the womb should prove a male, and be consigned, as soon as it saw the light, to a watery grave, or to the devouring jaws of a crocodile.



THE CROCODILE OR LEVIATHAN MENTIONED IN SCRIPTURE.

Josephus informs us that Amram was comforted in a vision, with an assurance that the child which his wife then bore should not only escape the malice of the tyrant, but

VIEW ON THE RIVER NILE.

prove, in fact, the deliverer of the Israelites. The story is not unlikely, and St. Paul asserts that "Moses, when he was born, was hidden by his parents three months through faith," (Heb. xi. 23,) which seems to imply that they had been favored with some remarkable promise concerning him.

All the Jewish writers mention the beauty of this child in strong terms; and even Moses himself, though remarkable for his candor and modesty, thus alludes to the circumstance: "And the woman conceived and bare a son; and when she saw that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months." Exod. ii. 2.

That Jochebed should be anxious to preserve her lovely babe from destruction is perfectly natural; but it can hardly be supposed that the faith which prompted her to use her endeavors for this affectionate purpose was grounded on a mere admiration of his beauty. The expression, therefore, must imply something superior to mere elegance of form, even something that indicated his being born for a great and mighty work. Faith has its prospects, and nothing but a view of this nature could have influenced the minds of these good people to secrete their darling child at the risk of their own lives.

At length it becomes impossible to conceal the secret any longer, and Jochebed is driven to the sad necessity of exposing her beloved infant to the most dreadful dangers.

Still faith loses not its influence upon her mind. Though she must comply with the shocking requisition of Pharaoh, she will adopt some means whereby her child may escape the vengeance of a blood-thirsty persecutor. She knows that the GOD of Israel can save even from the mighty waters, and can deliver from the devouring jaws of monsters. With great pains and with considerable ingenuity does she contrive a little basket of bulrushes, which she daubs, both inside and out, with slime and pitch. Alas! what a feeble bulwark is this against the numerous dangers to which the child must be exposed, and what chance can there be of his finding some kind hand to deliver him in a country, the inhabitants of which are set by inclination, and by the example and orders of their sovereign, against the Hebrew race?

But Jochebed acts by faith; and, therefore, she not only does the best she can to preserve her son, but she stations her daughter Miriam near the brink of the river to watch the issue.

That gracious BEING, who put it into the heart of this excellent woman to provide an ark for the saving of her child, guided the steps of Pharaoh's daughter to the banks of the river with her maidens. The princess soon perceived the little vessel lying among the flags, and being struck with the singularity of its appearance, she caused it to be brought to her; but what were her emotions when, on opening it, she discovered an infant of remarkable beauty? The little foundling, as if conscious of his own misery, and aware of the rank of the person who beheld him, "wept." Exod. ii. 6.

Sympathy and compassion stand not long in deliberation; this noble-minded lady no sooner viewed the helpless condition of the child than she regarded him as thrown by Heaven in her way for protection, and at once she formed the resolution of rearing him up as her own son.

Miriam, without seeming to have any particular concern in this interesting scene, seized an opportunity of mingling with the attendants, and of recommending a Hebrew woman to nurse the child. Her offer being accepted, she instantly ran home with a joyful heart, and brought her mother, who received her child from the princess with this charge, "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages."

Jochebed has now no occasion to seek for secret places where she may lay her babe, to keep him from the prying eyes of merciless inquisitors, but she can exhibit him with an honest pride, as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, and receives a liberal reward for nourishing him, whom she values equally at least with her own life. Her fears and tears, her anxieties and agonies are all changed into gratitude, and joy, and flattering expectation; so gracious is the ALMIGHTY unto his faithful servants, and so bountiful is he unto all them that diligently seek him!

When the child was of a proper age his pious mother, who, without doubt, had taken no ordinary pains to imbue his mind with the principles of pure religion, took him to court, where he was affectionately received by his royal protectress, who gave him a name commemorative of the manner by which she first obtained him: "And she called him MOSES, because," said she, "I drew him out of the water."

Under the protection of his illustrious patron Moses enjoyed the highest distinctions,

and obtained all the advantages of a princely education, which advantages he did not fail to improve to the utmost, though he himself passes over this part of his life in silence. An apostle, however, asserts, that "he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," (Acts vii. 22,) and all history allows that this country was then the principal seat of learning and of science.

The accomplishments of Moses as a soldier and a scholar, while he was regarded as a prince in Egypt, are celebrated by ancient authors of great credit; but we choose to pass over these things, and to confine our narrative within the limits which the sacred history prescribes. The space of time between his being brought to court, and his renunciation of princely dignity, is scarcely noticed; so modest was Moses in all things that related to his personal history, as scarcely to mention a circumstance concerning himself, except what had manifestly a necessary connexion with the history of his nation.

Thus much indeed we know, that at the age of forty he gave up all the honor and prospects to which he was entitled, as the adopted heir of Pharaoh's daughter, "choosing rather," as St. Paul expresses it, "to endure affliction with the people of GOD, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of CHRIST greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, having respect unto the recompense of reward." Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26.

Considering that he was trained up from his youth among the Egyptian nobles, priests, and magi, it may well strike us with admiration that he should prefer the alliance of poor, abject, and despised slaves, to all the dazzling splendors of a court, and the right of succession to a powerful diadem.

But worldly distinctions had no charms in the eyes of Moses, nor had the gayety of a palace any allurements for him, while his brethren were laboring at the brick-kiln, and were groaning under the lash of their inhuman oppressors. He considered himself as heir with them of the promise made by the ALMIGHTY unto the patriarchs; and he sighed with them for the fields of Canaan, and for the free and undisturbed exercise of that religion which their fathers had received immediately from GOD.

The encomium bestowed by St. Paul upon Moses, that "he esteemed the reproach of CHRIST greater riches than the treasures in Egypt," is too remarkable to be passed over without notice. The Jewish nation have ever attached the most magnificent objects to the reign of MESSIAH, and it was this false conception of his true character which led them to reject him when he actually appeared, and wrought wonders infinitely more glorious than those which were performed in Egypt for the redemption of Israel. But Moses had a right idea of the spiritual kingdom of CHRIST, and preferred an interest therein, though it necessarily involved present poverty and reproach, to all the proud and envied distinctions of this world.

He had "respect unto the recompense of reward," or to that salvation which should be the reward of the MESSIAH'S sufferings and sacrifice: and on that account he renounced all the honors and pleasures of a court, and cast in his lot with "the people of GOD," though they were then in affliction, and were without any prospect of deliverance.

It was the custom of Moses, every day, to pay a visit of compassion to his distressed brethren, to console them in their misery, to render them good offices by his influence, and to cheer them with the hope that their GOD would one day "visit and redeem his people."

On one of these occasions his indignation was roused by seeing an Egyptian "smiting a Hebrew." Exod. ii. 11. The expression implies that the oppressor was in the act of extreme violence, and it is not unfrequently used to express the act of slaying another. The sympathy of Moses was excited in behalf of his injured brother, accordingly he attacked the Egyptian, who fell in the contest; and Moses, fearful that a discovery of the fact would raise the fury of all Egypt against him, "buried the body in the sand."

The next day he went out as usual, and beheld another scene still more affecting than the former. The cruelties of the Egyptians to the Israelites were too familiar to excite any degree of surprise; but that the oppressed people should fall out among themselves, and evil-entreat one another, could hardly be credited. Yet so it was; and Moses had the mortification not only to witness a sharp contention between two of the Israelites, but, when he reproved the aggressor, to receive this insolent reply

MOSES AND THE EGYPTIAN.

"Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian yesterday?"

Instead of being regarded with gratitude for his intrepidity and generosity, he was treated as a proud and officious meddler, who wanted to assume a kind of sovereignty over his brethren. There are no foes more to be dreaded than those of a man's own household; none more vindictive; none more treacherous; none more irreconcilable. Moses saw that his secret was known to his brethren, and he was sensible, from the spirit and behavior of this man, that it was not safe even among them. The circumstance would not long be concealed from Pharaoh, and he had everything to fear from a haughty and bigoted tyrant, who held the Hebrews in detestation. He was right in his conjecture; for the king soon became acquainted with what Moses had done, and instantly gave orders to put him to death. Moses then fled with all haste into Arabia, and, coming near the city of Midian, sat down by the side of a well. He had not been long at this place before the daughters of Jethro, or Raguel, prince of the country, came to the well with their flocks. While they were busy in watering their fleecy charge, some rude shepherds came to the place, and drove the damsels away, that they might first serve their own flocks. The fatigued traveller could not see this brutal behavior unmoved. Though but one against many, he resolutely stood up against the unmannerly rustics, and compelled them to withdraw from the troughs, while he helped to water the flocks of the fair shepherdesses. Jethro was surprised that his daughters returned so soon from the well, and on being informed by them of the generous interposition of the stranger, he reproved them for their want of incivility in leaving him behind, and sent instantly a messenger to invite him to his house. The hospitable treatment which he met with in Midian and the amiable character of

Jethro, so pleased Moses that "he was content to dwell with the man," or to become his servant. Exod. ii. 21.

The smallest incidents are instructive; and this condescension of Moses to enter into the service of Jethro as a shepherd, affords a lesson of importance.

The pastoral occupation was held in detestation by the Egyptians, and those who exercised it were looked upon by them with contempt and abhorrence. Moses had been educated in the Egyptian manner, and every attempt was made to instil into his mind a regard for all the prejudices of the people, over whom, it was supposed, he would one day be called to reign.

The magnanimity of his mind we have already had occasion to admire, in his rejection of princely rank, with all its flattering prospects; but we now see him conquering pride, prejudice, and ambition, in stooping to the humble office of a shepherd, and contenting himself with a crook, when he might have wielded a sceptre.

But Moses was the child of Providence, and all the scenes of his life show the directing hand of God, who pursues a course for the accomplishment of his great designs quite different from that which would be adopted by erring but conceited man.

The destined leader of Israel might acquire many useful accomplishments in the palace of Pharaoh, but it was expedient that, in an humble life, he should obtain a conquest over his passions, and a practical acquaintance with divine truths. He was, therefore, led into the peaceful plains of Arabia, and to the lowly occupation of a shepherd, that he might be thoroughly fitted for that high office to which Heaven had ordained him.

His connexion also with Jethro may justly be considered as a part of the same divine plan. The example of that wise and good man, who was both a magistrate and a priest, could not fail to be peculiarly profitable to Moses, who rendered himself so agreeable to his employer by his abilities, industry, and piety, as to receive from him his daughter Zipporah for a wife, by whom he had two sons, Gershom and Eliezer.

While Moses dwelt in Midian, it is generally admitted that he composed, under the influence of divine inspiration, the books of Genesis and Job. The Holy Spirit of God seldom meets a man in the hurry of the world, but waits to be sought for in the shade of retirement. Would we obtain the sweet communications of divine grace, and be enriched with that "wisdom which cometh down from the Father of lights," we must leave the giddy and intoxicating scenes of folly and dissipation; everything, in short, which has a tendency to perplex the mind, and to keep it from serious and devout meditation.

All the eminent saints of God have been thus prepared for public service; and there can be no doubt but that Moses learned more of heavenly things in the fields of Midian than he ever would have done in the palace of Pharaoh. Here his mind was stored with divine wisdom, and here he enjoyed the visits of that "heavenly muse," by whose direction he composed those inestimable books, which have stamped immortality upon his name.

In this pleasing situation Moses spent twenty years, during which period the Israelites experienced no cessation from their miseries, no relaxation from toil, but were goaded on, day after day, by their unfeeling oppressors, to the most degrading and fatiguing employments. At the expiration of that time the king of Egypt, from whose face Moses had fled into Arabia, died; but the condition of the afflicted sons of Jacob, instead of being ameliorated by a new reign, became still worse. Pharaoh Amenophis, the successor of this tyrant, exceeded him in the cruelty of his disposition, and in his hatred of the Israelites. The yoke of oppression upon this afflicted people became intolerable, and "their cries and their groans came up unto God, who remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob." Exod. ii. 27.

It is the great design of affliction to bring men to a sense of their folly and sinfulness, in forgetting or disregarding Him who is the source of all good; and he is said then to remember us when we return to him in repentance and supplication.

The Almighty commiserated his people in their misery, and hearkened unto their prayers. When affliction had accomplished its object, and the children of Israel were awakened to call upon the God of their fathers, then did his zeal arise in their behalf, and then did he determine to bring them forth from the land of captivity "with a high hand, and with an outstretched arm."

But where are the instruments to perform this mighty work? By what powerful

EGYPTIAN BASTINADO.

means will GOD deliver his people from their galling chains, and cause them to triumph over their insolent oppressors? Shall numerous armies of foreign nations pour into the heart of Egypt, and by leading the haughty captive, cause the Israelites to go free? Or shall the distressed and persecuted people themselves grow impatient under the yoke, and, under the guidance of some bold spirit, "burst their bands asunder," and regain their liberty?

Some such, indeed, would be the means adopted by human policy to effect this desirable purpose; but the ALMIGHTY has taken the matter into his own hands, and the deliverance of his people must be accomplished in such a way, as shall clearly show to all generations that the work is his, and his alone.

Doubtless there were many able and virtuous men among the elders of Israel at this time; men well qualified by piety and experience to rule over the chosen nation; to regulate their polity, and to guide them, under the divine direction, to the land of promise. But all these are passed by, that there may be no pretence of human wisdom, contrivance, or power, in the whole affair; and that all may acknowledge the finger of GOD in every part of this wonderful redemption. The ALMIGHTY, passing over the wise, the experienced, and the mighty, fixes upon an humble shepherd in Midian as his minister for this great work. Here again appears a striking difference between human wisdom and that which is of GOD. Sagacious man would have chosen the opportunity of delivering Israel when Moses was in the zenith of court favor, or have conducted him for that purpose to the possession of the Egyptian throne. But infinite intelligence contrives the affair in quite another way, and rather chooses to commission Moses when an exile in Arabia than while a powerful prince in Egypt. Had the way of man been followed, perhaps neither Moses nor the Israelites would have formed a wish to obtain a settlement in Canaan, but might have contented themselves with possessing the country to which they had been so long accustomed.

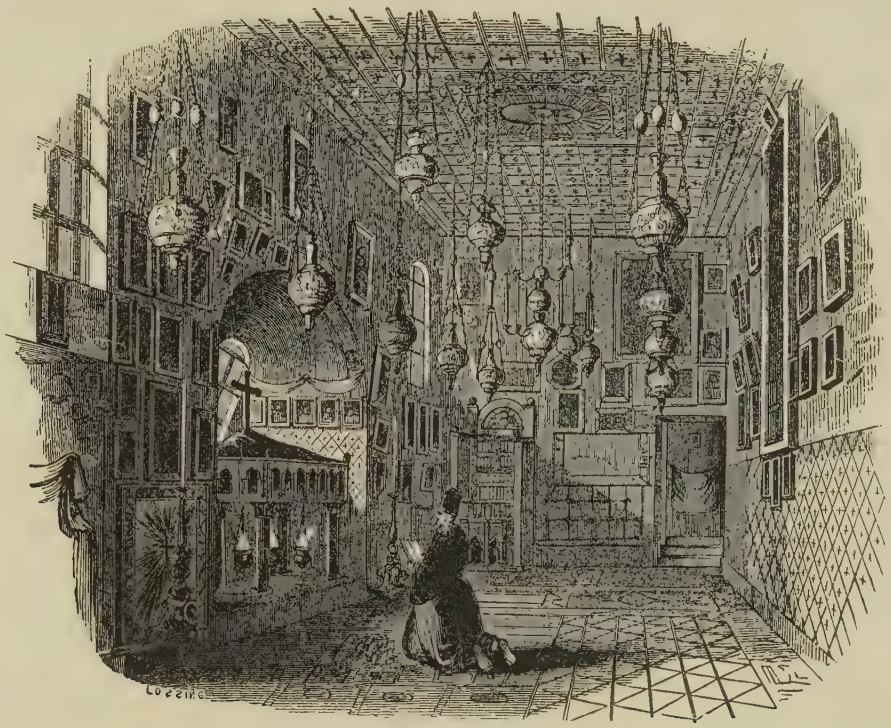
The extremity of their distress makes them sigh for deliverance; and the grievances they experience in the house of bondage bring to their recollection that good land which had been promised by the ALMIGHTY to the seed of Abraham. Thus also, in the depth of sorrow and suffering, amidst the trials and temptations of this sinful world, the Christian is reminded of his eternal inheritance, and sighs for the Jerusalem which is above.

The time being come wherein GOD had appointed to visit his people, he appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire, in a bush, while the shepherd was feeding his flock on Mount Horeb. Though the flame seemed to burn with the greatest violence, yet neither trunk, branches, nor leaves, sustained the slightest injury. A phenomenon so wonderful attracted the curiosity of Moses, and he immediately proceeded to the place, in order to ascertain the cause "why the bush was not burnt." But his eagerness was speedily checked by a voice from amidst the fire, calling him by his name,

THE BURNING BUSH.

* Pococke speaks of a bush planted in the garden by the monks, which they affirm to be the real one in which GOD appeared. "There is no sign of this at present," says Mr. Arundale, who has furnished the drawing for the present engraving. This is true; and Pococke must have misunderstood the monks, who certainly never pointed out any such bush to the older travellers any more than they do now. They have always described this chapel as covering the site of the burning bush. It seems to be now in the same state as when seen by Morison; and from his account it appears to have been built by the Empress Helena over the spot which tradition indicated as that on which the burning bush had stood, and, consequently, preceded the erection of the convent itself and the great church by Justinian. It adjoins the church, and is counted the most holy spot in Sinai. The walls are covered with mosaics and old Greek paintings, and from the ceiling are suspended thirty silver lamps, (presented to the chapel by different persons at different times,) which are all alight during the celebration of divine service, which, in this chapel, is every Sunday and on the feast days of the Virgin. The precise spot which the bush is supposed to have occupied is marked by an oblong slab of white marble, over which is an altar sustained by four small columns, also of white marble. From under the table of this altar are suspended three small lamps of silver, which are kept always burning.

That this marks the site of the burning bush is doubtful enough; but a degree of curiosity and interest still attaches to the structures and memorials by which, amidst these solitudes, men have sought to commemorate the remarkable events which occurred in them.



CHAPEL OF THE BURNING BUSH.

and commanding him "to take his shoes from off his feet, because the ground whereon he stood was holy." This sufficiently indicated the presence of the divine majesty; which, indeed, was soon proclaimed, for the awful BEING declared himself to be the "GOD of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob."

Well might Moses be afraid to look upon the Shechinah, or the tremendous manifestation of the Deity. "GOD is a consuming fire," and "with him there is terrible majesty;" how then can sinful man stand in his presence without fear and trembling?

But this visitation of the ALMIGHTY was not in judgment, but in pity and loving-kindness to man; Moses, therefore, "endured as seeing him who is invisible," (Heb. xi. 27,) and was admitted to a conference the most familiar and gracious that ever was vouchsafed to mortal man.

The ALMIGHTY begins with declaring his compassion for the sufferings of Israel, and his determination of delivering them from the hand of the Egyptians, and of putting them in possession of the good land which he had promised to their fathers. He then returns to a relation of their miseries in Egypt, as if he designed to excite in the mind of Moses a sympathetic concern for his afflicted brethren, and a wish to do them good. "Come now," says the LORD, "and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." Exod. iii. 10.

We have seen the eagerness of Moses to avenge the injury done to one of his countrymen; and have admired his conduct in renouncing all the riches and honors of Egypt to associate with a people groaning under the yoke of oppression. Can it be thought that his regard for them is abated, that his courage is extinguished, and that the quiet occupation of a shepherd has so far enervated his mind, as that he should prefer indolence to activity, and his own ease to the welfare of his countrymen? Can we think that Moses will refuse to accept a charge which has the ALMIGHTY for its author, and the deliverance of the afflicted Israelites for its object? Yet so it is; Moses is afraid to undertake the important mission; and the man who was all zeal in Egypt to rescue his brethren from the hands of their oppressors, is now backward to go to their relief, though GOD himself gives the command, and promises that his mission shall be crowned with success.

Man, when he acts by his own will, and by the impulse of his own affection, is all fire, and forwardness, and zeal; but when he is called of GOD to engage in his work, he trembles in the sense of his own weakness and insufficiency. Moses, in a most humiliating strain, excuses himself from engaging in this great work: "Who am I," says he, "that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" Exod. iii. 11.

Nothing becomes a man so much as humility. But diffidence may degenerate into infidelity; and too great a distrust of our own powers may carry us into a criminal disobedience of the positive commandments of GOD. He who calls us into the field of action can give us both wisdom and strength to perform the work which he has laid upon us.

When Moses expressed his inability to execute this mighty charge, he did well, but when he resisted the appointment, after a gracious promise of the divine presence and protection, he failed in his duty, and betrayed a spirit of unbelief. The ALMIGHTY had assured him that he should lead the people from their captivity, and yet he presumed to distrust the veracity of the declaration, by urging a variety of objections, which he considered as insurmountable obstacles against its accomplishment.

These objections were removed in the most condescending and convincing manner by the ALMIGHTY as fast as they were expressed by the petulant and unyielding shepherd; who resisted the force of even promises and miracles, and at length, when he had no excuse left, threw away the charge at once, saying, "O, my LORD, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send."* Exod. iv. 13.

Who can wonder that the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses for such perverseness?

Had an earthly monarch been so rudely treated by one of his subjects, whom he chose to honor by sending him as his representative to a foreign court, would he not have been justified in spurning the man from his presence, and in conferring the high

* It is at least probable that Moses alluded here to the sending of the SHILOH, or MESSIAH, the promised Saviour of Israel: and he might think that as he himself was descended from Levi he had no pretensions to so great a work, which belonged to one of the tribe of Judah. But if such were his notions, his conduct was still unjustifiable in resisting an express call from GOD.

distinction upon some other person? But though the divine displeasure was manifested against Moses, it did not flame into a judgment, but was so expressed as to melt his soul into submission. He resisted love and solicitation, reasoning, and even extraordinary gifts, for a long time; but when once the terrors of the LORD were displayed, he instantly became obedient to the divine will, and ready to go where the LORD directed him.

His submission averted the divine anger, and he received instructions for his conduct, with an assurance that Aaron, his brother, was on the way to meet him, being called to assist him in this great work as his "spokesman unto the people."

This remarkable conference being ended, Moses led his flock to Midian, and solicited Jethro's permission to visit his brethren in Egypt. The good old man readily gave his consent, and Moses set out with alacrity upon the journey, being encouraged by a declaration from the ALMIGHTY, that all those who had sought his life were dead.

On the way a circumstance occurred, which, from the brevity of the historian, is very obscure. Thus much, however, appears clear, that some divine judgment fell upon Moses which threatened his life, for having neglected the rite of circumcision in his family. As he was now appointed the leader of Israel, this omission was the more inexcusable, since it tended to set an evil example to that people. Zipporah, on being made acquainted with the reason of this visitation of GOD, performed the rite herself upon her son, and then in bitter terms upbraided Moses as "a bloody husband," either on account of the severity of the ceremony, or in detestation of the rite itself.

But whatever might be her meaning in this expression, the act she performed saved the life of her husband; and nothing more occurred till he and Aaron met "in the mount of GOD." This interview, after so long a separation, was tender and affecting; and it was of great importance to Moses to have so able an assistant as Aaron, who not only possessed the powers of eloquence, but, as a priest, had considerable influence upon the Israelites, and was well acquainted with their particular state and character.

These messengers of JEHOVAH were not long in unfolding their commission to the children of Israel, and in confirming it by those miraculous acts, which they were empowered to perform for the conviction of those to whom they were sent. The afflicted people were overjoyed at the information that the ALMIGHTY had remembered them in their low condition, and was about to emancipate them from slavery, and to bring them into the land promised to their fathers.

Thus the first fear of Moses that they would disbelieve his word was removed; but there are greater obstacles remaining. That the Israelites should receive the tidings of deliverance was natural enough; but will Pharaoh lend a willing ear to the commandment of JEHOVAH? Will he readily let such a numerous and serviceable body of men go free, at the request of two obscure old men, who come in the name of a deity whom he does not adore?

The LORD had prepared Moses for the reception he should meet with from the tyrant of Egypt, by telling him at the mount that he would not hearken to his word. But the message must be delivered, though the bearers are assured that it will not be obeyed.

Moses at Mount Horeb was exceedingly reluctant to accept this high charge, and was even guilty of an obstinate resistance to the divine will; but now that he is entered upon the work, we find him prompt and vigorous in its execution. Leaving the Israelites, he and his brother boldly enter into the presence of Pharaoh, and address him in this dignified strain: "Thus saith the LORD GOD of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." Exod. v. 1.

No country upon earth ever abounded with so much superstition as Egypt. It was so prolific of deities that every element was worshipped, and the most contemptible of reptiles received divine honors. But though Pharaoh might be religious enough in his way, he received this intelligence of a new deity with surprise and contempt. That the poor outcast slaves, who existed by his will, and labored for his pleasure, should have a GOD of such authority as to prescribe laws for him, was not to be endured. He conceived that this deity must be powerless and insignificant, because his votaries were in the most abject condition. "Who is the LORD," saith he, "that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go."

Moses and Aaron, notwithstanding this peremptory refusal, still urged their request, and pleaded the cause of their brethren with great earnestness. Their zeal, however, only served to irritate the resentment of the tyrant; and after venting severe reproaches

upon them as movers of sedition, he gave orders to the task-masters to withhold from the Israelites their accustomed allowance of straw for the making of bricks, and yet to exact from them daily the same number as before.

Thus the mission of Moses and Aaron, which had just exhilarated the minds of the people, and had filled them with eager expectations of deliverance, now proved the occasion of new miseries and persecutions. Bad as their condition was before these men came among them with their promises and their wonderful signs, it was not to be compared to the intolerable hardships which the vindictive tyrant, in consequence of this mission, has laid upon them.

Moses was not prepared for this misfortune, though he had been told by GOD himself that the tyrant would not, till driven to the utmost extremity, consent to the departure of the Israelites. It was very mortifying to the good man to perceive that his efforts to serve his brethren had only contributed to plunge them into deeper affliction. He could not reply to the keen reproaches which the officers of the people cast upon him, but went and poured out his complaint to the ALMIGHTY in these pathetic terms: "LORD, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all."

What a poor erring creature is man! If success does not crown his endeavors at the time, and in the way he expected, he complains as if he were unjustly treated. The most eminent servants of GOD have betrayed, by their despondency, this impatient spirit, and their failings are candidly recorded, even by themselves, to teach us cheerful submission to the divine will, even when things are going strongly against us; and a vigorous perseverance in the way of righteousness, though we are continually experiencing mortifications.

Moses was ready to abandon the work as soon as he had entered upon it, though he was assured by the ALMIGHTY that Pharaoh should be forced at last to let the people depart from his dominions. He was ordered to go first, and to comfort his brethren with this gracious promise; but their spirits were broken with extremity of labor, and they hearkened not unto him. Their dejection added to the despondency of Moses, and, therefore, when the LORD commanded him to deliver a second message to Pharaoh, commanding him, in his name, to let the people go, he endeavored to excuse himself, by urging his want of eloquence.

The ALMIGHTY, in reply to this querulous servant, directs him to take with him his brother Aaron as his "prophet," while he himself is so highly honored, as to stand the representative of GOD to Pharaoh. Such authority and powers were never bestowed upon any man as were now conferred upon Moses. He is to appear before the king of Egypt, vested with attributes above all created dignity and excellence, having the elements of nature at his command, and even life and death at his disposal. The proud and impious monarch regards the two old men with contempt, and, as they profess to be the messengers of the supreme GOD, he demands of them a miracle, as a proof of their mission. His proposition is accepted. The rod in the hand of Aaron is cast on the ground, at the command of Moses, and instantly becomes a frightful serpent. Moses, when he beheld the same wonderful transformation in Horeb, fled from the venomous monster: but Pharaoh views it without alarm, and affecting to regard it as a mere juggle, sends for his magicians, who perform a similar act with their rods. It may be deemed surprising that JEHOVAH should so far give countenance to a false religion, as to permit these deceivers to imitate the miracle of his servants. But this was a contest between the votaries of the true GOD and the worshippers of demons. The necromancers are therefore suffered to succeed in some instances, to encourage them to persevere in their opposition, that the victory of JEHOVAH may be the more triumphant, and their defeat and disgrace the more mortifying. Thus idolatry and impiety are suffered to prevail for a time, that the power of GOD may be evident in their destruction, and that his religion may shine with a greater splendor, when contrasted with their impotence and blackness.

The sorcerers of Egypt boldly cast down their rods at the command of Pharaoh, and they also became serpents; but that the power of JEHOVAH might be seen, the rod of Aaron swallowed up the rest, which evidently implied, that the farther prosecution of this contest should terminate in the confusion of the powers of darkness. "Pharaoh's heart," however, "was hardened," as the LORD had said: nevertheless, Moses was commanded to present himself again before him in the morning as he

MOSES AND AARON BEFORE PHARAOH

went to pay his early devotions to the principal deity of Egypt, the river Nile. The tyrant, as might well be supposed, resisted the application made to him, when, by the direction of Moses, Aaron stretched out his rod, and immediately the favorite river, the adored object of the superstitious Egyptians, and all the water in the land, became blood, and of so offensive a quality, that all the fish therein died. So awful a phenomenon, instead of subduing the pride of the monarch, only increased it; for the magicians, by their art, succeeded in imitating this miracle also, thus contributing to their own misery and defeat. To perform good was out of their power, but to multiply evil was allowed them for a while, that they and their admirers might be covered with shame.

Seven days did this dreadful plague prevail in Egypt; and though the condition of his subjects was very grievous for want of water during that time, yet Pharaoh continued obdurate, when Moses repeated his request, accompanied with the threat of another visitation in case of his refusal. The same river was now made to pour forth immense swarms of frogs, which entered into all the dwellings of the Egyptians, and even into the private rooms of the palace. The most contemptible creatures become mighty instruments in the hands of the LORD for the punishment of the wicked. This judgment, though partly imitated by the sorcerers, proved so intolerable to Pharaoh, that he gave his consent to the requisition of Moses, and promised, if he should be delivered from the frogs, to let the people go. But no sooner was the plague removed than the treacherous tyrant violated his word; on which the messengers of the LORD, without warning him as heretofore, "smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice throughout all the land of Egypt, upon man and upon beast." Exod. viii. 17.

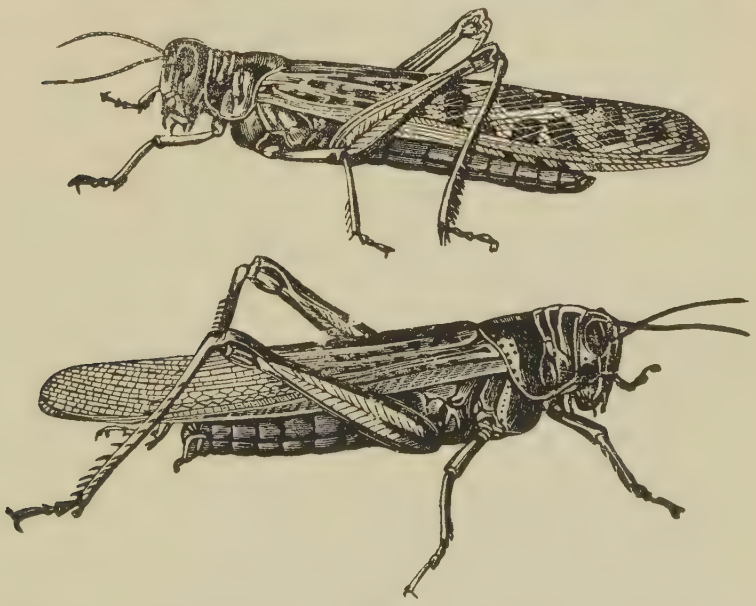
EGYPTIAN FROGS (*Rana punctata*).

Though the magicians themselves were not free from this loathsome visitation, yet they were so bent upon their foolish opposition to the divine power, as to endeavor to imitate what they should have tried to remove. But all their attempts were vain to produce objects that were a plague instead of a blessing, and then they had the honesty to acknowledge that "this was the finger of GOD." Their impotence being confessed, who would expect that Pharaoh's infidelity should remain; but his heart was hardened, and the repeated proofs which he experienced of the power of GOD only made him indifferent to warnings and miracles. He still offers his devotions to that river which the ALMIGHTY has twice made use of as a scourge to chastise him for his impiety; and on the banks thereof he is again accosted by Moses, who repeats his demand, accompanied with the threatening of a swarm of flies, or rather of immense multitudes of pestilent insects of various kinds. This judgment proved so troublesome that Pharaoh was again constrained to yield his consent that the people should go into the wilderness to sacrifice unto the LORD: but no sooner were the flies withdrawn than his obduracy returned, and his plighted word was once more broken. Still Moses follows him with entreaties and remonstrances before he brings down new plagues; but entreaties, remonstrances, and threatenings are all in vain. A dreadful disorder seizes the cattle of the Egyptians, while those belonging to the Israelites are not affected. Next a grievous disease, consisting of "biles with blains," attacked both man and beast, so that the magicians "could not stand before Moses because of

the bile." Exod. ix. 1. But even these judgments, fearful as they were, could not bring down the pride of this obstinate monarch; and Moses, with wonderful perseverance and intrepidity, continued still to visit him with his demand. He next denounced the vengeance of the ALMIGHTY upon him in this solemn language: "Thus saith the LORD GOD of the Hebrews: Let my people go, that they may serve me. For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, that thou mayest know there is none like me in all the earth."

Not a single prediction uttered by this extraordinary man had been found to fail; how then could Pharaoh hope to gain the victory in so unequal a contest? But when man is determined upon disobedience, predictions and judgments will only serve to harden him in his rebellion, and hurry him on to his utter destruction. A dreadful storm of hail, mixed with fire, "smote throughout all the land of Egypt," so that the fruits of the earth were wholly destroyed, and numbers of beasts and men were slain. Pharaoh's fears were alarmed by this awful visitation, which threatened to desolate all the country, except the province inhabited by the Israelites, and he made his submission again to Moses. The man of GOD knew well the deceitfulness of the tyrant's heart; but that the glory of JEHOVAH might be completely manifested, he went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and by spreading out his hands to the LORD the storm ceased. With the judgment departed the repentance of the king, and he "sinned yet more, he and his servants."

The messengers of JEHOVAH appear again in the presence of Pharaoh, and threaten him with such a tremendous swarm of locusts as shall cover the face of the earth, and devour all the residue of that which escaped from the hail, and every tree of the field



LOCUSTS.

No visitation is more alarming in these countries than that of locusts, because nothing is secure from their depredations, nor can any means be adopted to expel them.

Pliny's account of them is very curious: "This plague," says he, "is attributed to the anger of the gods; for they are sometimes very great, and make such a noise with their wings, that you would suppose them to be a larger kind of flying creatures. They also darken the sun, while the people from below behold them with a painful solicitude, lest they should light upon their fields. Their strength is very great, and, as if it was a small matter to fly over the seas, they run through immense tracts of

.and, and in the harvest overspread the earth with a dreadful cloud, burning up almost every herb by their touch, and biting and eating through everything, even the doors of the houses."*

Well, therefore, might the officers of Pharaoh tremble at the denunciation of so horrible an invasion, and reproach him sharply as being insensible to the calamities of his country. "How long," say they, "shall this man be a snare unto us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their GOD. Knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?" Exod. x. 7.

Pharaoh felt a momentary fear on receiving this cutting remonstrance, and therefore sent for Moses and Aaron in all haste, and gave permission that the men might go and serve the LORD, but that they should leave their families behind them as hostages. On quitting his presence, Moses stretched forth his wonderful rod, and behold a great east wind brought up the fierce ministers of the divine vengeance, "which darkened all the land, and devoured all the herbs of the field." When Pharaoh saw that the word of Moses was realized to the greatest extent, he again "confessed his sin, and entreated his forgiveness and mediation with the LORD" for the removal of the evil. The locusts were accordingly driven away, but the impiety of Pharaoh returned; and Moses, without giving him warning as he had been accustomed to do, "stretched forth his hand towards heaven, and a thick darkness covered all the land of Egypt three days, but the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." Exod. x. 23.

This "darkness," says the sacred historian, "was such as might be felt;" and the author of the book of Wisdom describes it as a kind of temporary hell, in which there appeared to the wicked, whose consciences suggested to them everything that was horrible, "a fire kindled of itself very dreadful; they were scared with beasts that passed by, and hissing of serpents; and they were vexed with monstrous apparitions, so that they fainted and died for fear; while over them was spread a heavy night, an image of that darkness which should afterwards receive them." Wisd. xviii.

Whether supernatural appearances rendered this gloomy state thus dreadful, or whether the consciences of the wicked were only haunted by imaginary horrors, we cannot determine; but this is certain, that the mind of Pharaoh was greatly agitated, and he sent once more for Moses to deliver him from this plague. His submission, however, was reluctant, and he could not bring himself to obey fully the commandment of the LORD. All the people may now go, but their property must be left behind. Pharaoh will not consent to their entire emancipation, and Moses will not, on the other hand, agree to leave "a hoof behind," for "we know not," saith he, "with what we must serve the LORD until we come thither." Exod. x. 26. We have seen Moses unwilling to undertake this arduous work; we have attended with concern to his evasive excuses, and to his repeated complaints; but from the time of his first standing in competition with the magicians, we admire his perseverance, his intrepidity, coolness, and dignified deportment. He now stands up in a determined tone against the mercenary demand of Pharaoh, and insists upon the departure of the people with the whole of their property.

This provokes the anger of Pharaoh into fury, and he drives Moses from his presence with a menace, that if he again presumes to appear before him his life shall be the price of his temerity. "Thou hast spoken well," says Moses, as he departs from the infatuated tyrant: "I will see thy face again no more."

Pharaoh's cup is now full; he banishes the minister of GOD from his presence, and thus rashly sets at once the seal upon the long-postponed warrant of his own destruction.

It is judiciously observed by an excellent writer, that "these miracles were intended to evince the superiority of JEHOVAH over the power and elements of nature, which, at that time, were objects of worship among the Egyptians, but plainly appeared to act at the command of Moses, in subordination to their great CREATOR, the GOD of the Hebrews. In the heavens, on the earth, and in the waters, supremacy and independence were domonstrated to belong to him only: fire and air, thunder and lightning, wind, rain, and hail obeyed his word; rivers became blood, and their inhabitants perished; insects and animals left their wonted habitations to destroy vegetables or torment man: so that wherever the gods of Egypt were supposed to reside, and to exert their influences in favor of their votaries, in all places and all circumstances victory declared for JEHOVAH. Hence modern as well as ancient idolaters may learn, not to put their trust in the world, but in Him who made, and who can and will destroy it;

* Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xi. cap. 29.

whose power can render the most insignificant of his creatures instruments of his vengeance; and, in a moment, arm all the elements against sinners; and whose mercy will employ that power in the final salvation of his church; when, as the author of the book of Wisdom expresseth it, "he shall make the creature his weapon for the revenge of his enemies, and the world shall fight for him against the universe." Wisd. v. 17, 20.

These signs and wonders having failed to humble the haughty mind of Pharaoh into obedience, the ALMIGHTY proceeds to make a more terrible display of his power; and, therefore, laying aside for a time his faithful servants, he says to Moses, "About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt." Exod. xi. 4.

But before this great judgment takes place, the Israelites must prepare for their speedy departure, and means must be adopted to secure them from the approaching vengeance.

DRESS AND ORNAMENTS OF FEMALES IN THE EAST.
(From various Sculptures and Paintings.)

In the first place they are directed to obtain from the Egyptians "jewels of silver, jewels of gold, and raiment," (Exod. xi. 2,) which are readily granted them from the dread of the GOD of Israel, which has filled the minds of those people. Some impertinent skeptics from this transaction have taken occasion to charge Moses and the Israelites with being guilty of a deliberate fraud. But if these writers had possessed more knowledge than malice, they would have found that the word rendered "borrow" in our translation signifies "to ask, solicit, and even to demand;" and when the passage is so read, we learn from it no more than this, that the Israelites, who had been most cruelly used and enslaved by the Egyptians, now settled accounts with them for wages, and obtained these things as a small retribution for the injuries they had received. When a man lends an article, he naturally expects to have it again; but when he gives it, nothing would be more unreasonable than to look for its return.

To preserve the habitations of his people from the impending judgment which was to close the plagues of Egypt, JEHOVAH commanded them to take for every family a male lamb without blemish, of a year old, and having slain it, to sprinkle the side-posts and upper door-posts of each house with the blood thereof. The flesh of this paschal lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs, in remembrance of their oppression in the house of bondage, and in haste, as men passing from captivity to liberty. This solemn rite was ordained to be a standing sacrament in the Jewish church, as a memorial of the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian oppression; and likewise to shadow out that greater deliverance from spiritual thraldom which CHRIST, the true paschal lamb, should, in the fulness of time, accomplish for his church.

While the Israelites were engaged in feasting upon this sacrifice, and stood ready prepared for a sudden march, at the silent and awful hour of midnight, the avenging

angel of the LORD passed through the land, and smote all the first-born of Egypt. Instantly all was horror and confusion. The groans of the dying, and the shrieks of their surviving friends, were heard on all sides: no person could run to the assistance of his neighbor, for all had to lament the same calamity; "there was not a house where there was not one dead."

So sudden and fearful a stroke struck Pharaoh and his people with the apprehension that the destruction would be general; and looking upon the Hebrews as the occasion of their misery, they urged, and even forced them to depart, "for," say they, "we be all dead men."

Year of the World, 2513.

Thus with "a high hand, and with an outstretched arm," does JEHOVAH lead his people out of Egypt; and the family which came thither, to the number of only seventy souls, is now multiplied to six hundred thousand, besides children. With this numerous body went "a mixed multitude of other nations," who, seeing the wonders of the LORD, chose to accompany a people so highly favored by Heaven.

Instead of taking the nearest way to Canaan, Moses leads his mighty charge along the skirts of the great wilderness, which bounds Egypt and Arabia Petræa, to a place called Pihahiroth, on the edge of the Red Sea. A worse situation, to all human appearance, could not have been chosen than this; for on each hand were impassable mountains; in the rear the people were exposed to the attacks of an enemy, without having any means of defence; and in their front lay an expanse of water, which it seemed impossible for them to cross. But the whole was of divine direction, for JEHOVAH, who led the way in "a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night," knew that when the terrors of Pharaoh were subsided, he would repeat the sacrifice he had made to his fears, and hasten after the fugitives. And so it happened; for when the tyrant learned the course which the Israelites had taken, and the place where they lay encamped, he considered them as a prey fallen into a snare, and immediately mustered his forces to pursue them. When the people descried their oppressors, their spirits gave way, and, forgetting the miracles which they had witnessed, and even unmindful of the divine presence amongst them, they began to upbraid Moses in the most ungrateful and cowardly manner: "Because there were no graves in Egypt," say they, "hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness?" Exod. xiv. 11, 12.

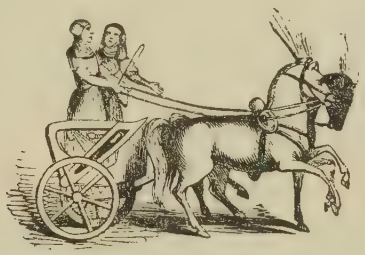
The situation of Moses at this moment was extremely critical. He was surrounded by the most formidable dangers, and of these the desponding and seditious spirit of the people under him was perhaps the greatest. Their conduct, at this early stage, showed plainly enough how refractory they were likely to prove, even when they should be freed from their present difficulty; and what trouble he would have in conducting them through the wilderness, although JEHOVAH himself was their guide and defence. But collected in himself, and animated by the strongest faith, Moses stood unmoved amidst the dangers which beset him, and addressed the complaining multitude in these noble and encouraging terms: "Fear ye not; stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will show you to-day, for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

The mildness and intrepidity of the man of GOD, in this instance, stand unparalleled in history: and his animating declaration to the people infinitely exceeds the boasted eloquence of Demosthenes, in rousing the Athenians against the oppressions of Philip of Macedon.

But though Moses was fully assured that the arm of JEHOVAH would be exerted on this occasion in behalf of the chosen seed, yet he did not know the exact manner in which their deliverance would be accomplished. He had recourse, therefore, to prayer; and while his faith was strong, his solicitations were urgent. We know that the promises of the LORD are, like himself, immutable; but this does not discharge us from the duty of praying for their fulfilment.

While Moses was fervent in his supplications he received this answer: "Why criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." He had just

before told them to "stand still;" but JEHOVAH gives the command "go forward;" and at the same instant the miraculous, awful column removes from the front to the rear of the camp, as a barrier between the Israelites and the Egyptians. Moses readily obeys the divine injunction, and the people as readily follow him; but they soon reach the sea-shore, when, lifting up his rod, a violent east wind arises, and cleaves down the waters in the midst, so that a spacious channel is made, through which they all pass dry shod. The tremendous waves are heaped up in mountains on each side, and not a particle of water can quit its place, while the power of JEHOVAH restrains it till his people are all safely landed on the opposite shore. How beautiful is the description of this miraculous event given by the Psalmist: "The waters saw thee, O GOD, the waters saw thee; they were afraid; the depths also were troubled." Ps lxxvii. 16.



EGYPTIAN CHARIOT.

Pharaoh, driven on by rage and ambition, enters the dreadful chasm, and, regardless of the roaring of the mountainous billows, supernaturally piled up on each hand, the terrible pillar before him, and of the thunderings and lightnings from above, he continues his pursuit. No sooner are the Israelites safely landed than the presence of GOD frowns terribly upon the Egyptain host, they are thrown into disorder, their hearts misgive them, and they attempt to retreat—but in vain, for the rod of Moses is again stretched out, the watery mountains rush together with a horrible crash, and whelm the impious Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen, in the mighty deep.

When the Israelites saw the potent army, which they had so much dreaded, thus instantly and totally destroyed, they trembled, wondered, and "believed in the LORD." They became conscious of their ingratitude to GOD, and were sensible of their injustice to his servant Moses. That eminent saint, as he stood and contemplated the terrible power and amazing goodness of JEHOVAH, broke out into a rapturous song of thanksgiving.

Devotional gratitude and religious exultation open the piece. JEHOVAH then appears as a mighty warrior prepared for battle. "The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is his name." His enemies are instantly introduced; but no sooner do they appear than the arm of OMNIPOTENCE dashes them into the depths of the sea, as a stone that is cast by the hand of a giant. The poet then praises, in the most elevated terms, the power of JEHOVAH, and celebrates his goodness and his vengeance at the same time. He represents the breath of the LORD as rearing up the waters in mountainous heaps, and as drying up the depths of the sea, that his redeemed may pass safely over. Here Pharaoh and his host are again happily introduced as following with rage and triumph after the Israelites. The impetuosity, rage, and arrogance of the tyrant are most strikingly represented in the confused and rapid expressions which he is made to utter as he pursues his mad career: "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil: my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them." It is impossible for human language to express, or genius to paint, a haughty, vengeful, confident enemy, in a more forcible manner than this. The elegance of the picture is indeed inimitable, but it is carried to the height of sublimity when JEHOVAH is introduced: "Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters." The devout ascription of praise is then repeated; and the mercy of the LORD to his redeemed is again gratefully expressed. This animates the poet with the spirit of prophecy, and he predicts, in terms plain and energetic, the fate of the Canaanites and the establishment of Israel: "Fear and dread shall fall

OVERTHROW OF PHARAOH.

upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over which thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mount of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O LORD, which thy hands have established. The LORD shall reign for ever and ever." Exod. xv. 1—19. The noble ode then closes with a repetition of the miraculous destruction of Pharaoh, and the deliverance of Israel, This recurrence is not tautology, but propriety and elegance; for it is the expression of the heart, full of a mighty blessing just experienced it gives life to the hymn, and tends to keep a sense of the miracle always alive in the minds of those for whose use it is composed.

To particularize all the beauties of this celebrated piece would far exceed the limits of this memoir; but we may safely assert, that the reader who peruses it without the most lively emotions of admiration, is as destitute of taste as he must be of devotion. Had Longinus read this production he would have dwelt upon its elegance with rapture, as a finished specimen of true sublimity; and his commendation of it would have far exceeded the just encomium which he has so candidly bestowed upon Moses's description of the creation.

But is this piece merely to be admired on account of its beauties as a composition, and as being most exactly descriptive of a stupendous miracle of mercy and judgment? By no means. If the Israelite could sing it with personal exultation and gratitude, so can the Christian, if for Pharaoh and the Egyptians he substitutes the great adversary of mankind with his numerous legions, driven down to the nethermost abyss, at the moment when they were anticipating to themselves a complete triumph in the crucifixion of JESUS. He who conducted the children of Israel from Egypt through the Red Sea, and made bare his arm in the destruction of his enemies, hath opened a way through death for his redeemed to pass over into a land of eternal rest. He guides them in the wilderness "by his strength unto his holy habitation." They are supported "in the valley of the shadow of death by the rod" (Ps. xxiii. 4) of his consolation and power; and when they are safely landed on the celestial shore, they shall see their spiritual enemies whelmed in the bottomless deep, to rise again no more for ever. Then shall the ransomed of the LORD strike aloud their golden harps, and joyfully unite in "singing the song of Moses, the servant of GOD, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints." Rev. xv. 3.

VIEW ON THE SHORES OF THE RED SEA.

The Israelites, after performing solemn services of religion on the shores of the Red Sea, leave that highly favored spot, and advance three days march into the wilderness.

But their gratitude lasts not long. One inconvenience and difficulty occasions a general spirit of murmuring among them. The want of water is their first distress; and when they meet with some at Marah, it proves so bitter that they cannot drink it. They then murmur against Moses, and this is the case in every exigence that befalls them. If danger appears, or any want is experienced, the ungrateful people immediately upbraid their leader as the cause, and, unmindful of the miracles wrought on their behalf, complain of their deliverance as an evil, instead of being thankful for it as a blessing. The unwholesome waters are healed by Moses, but a miracle with this refractory multitude is remembered no longer than while they are enjoying the benefits of it. When their provisions are consumed, instead of recollecting what GOD has done for them, their base despondency returns, and they attack Moses and Aaron again with their ungenerous accusations. "Would to GOD," say they, "we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." Exod. xvi. 3.

The possession of liberty, and the presence of GOD, were of less value, in their estimation, than the "flesh-pots of Egypt," though when they were groaning under the lash of their oppressors they could sigh and pray for deliverance. Sensual minds are attentive only to the present gratification of their appetites, and as they have no gratitude for mercies past, so they have no resignation under disappointment, nor any confidence in the goodness of GOD for blessings to come. In the conduct of Israel of old we may see our own temper and behavior. Were they unmindful of the continued and stupendous miracles performed for their deliverance and their support? How have we remembered the innumerable benefits which we have received ever since we were born? Do we bear in our minds as we ought to do the wonderful redemption which CHRIST hath wrought out for us by his death and passion? Do we receive with grateful hearts the refreshing streams of eternal life contained in the blessed gospel and in his holy ordinances? On the contrary, have we not forgotten the blessings of Providence and of grace in the season of pleasure and prosperity? And when we have experienced want and adversity, instead of bringing our sin to remembrance, have not our hearts been impatient and rebellious? Let us, then, when we condemn the ungrateful and unrighteous conduct of Israel, examine our own characters, and taking shame to ourselves, humble our hearts before the throne of grace.

How patient is Moses under this severe and ungenerous accusation of the people; and how forbearing and gracious is the ALMIGHTY towards them! Instead of complaining against them, Moses supplicates the divine favor on their behalf, and the LORD rains upon them bread from heaven in the morning, and sends them abundance of quails in the evening. Exod. xvi. 13.

This miraculous bread continued to descend every evening, that of the Sabbath excepted, until the Israelites obtained possession of part of the promised land, and then it ceased. It was a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost upon the ground at first, but afterwards it was white, about the size of a coriander-seed, and the taste was like that of honey. This they called מָן הוּא, *Man hue*, which means, *What is this?* Of this they gathered the six following days, but were prohibited to leave any till the next morning; for if they did, it stank, and bred worms, to express to them their constant dependance upon GOD for their "daily bread." On the eve of the Sabbath they were to gather a double portion, because none descended on that day, which was ordained to be kept strictly holy throughout the camp. To perpetuate the remembrance of this miracle, the LORD commanded Moses to "take a pot, to and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for their generation." This manna was an emblem of that "true bread," which was, in after ages, to descend from heaven for the support of man.

On coming to Rephidim the Israelites were again destitute of water; a want which is frequently experienced in that hot and sandy region.

As usual, their former mercies were forgotten, and their rebellious spirit burst forth with violence against Moses, who was constrained to fly to the LORD with his complaint. And his language sufficiently proves what a dangerous situation he was in from the seditious spirit which prevailed. "What shall I do unto this people?" says he: "they be almost ready to stone me." Exod. xvii. 4.

Who can refrain from sympathizing with this excellent man in his distress? and who would wonder at seeing the vengeance of Heaven falling upon this perverse and

thankless race? But the "LORD is compassionate, long-suffering, and of tender mercy." He bears with all the stubborn and wayward conduct of his people; and instead of sending down judgments upon them, he commands his servant to smite the flinty rock in their presence. Moses obeys, and instantly a refreshing torrent issues forth, and becomes a copious stream, which accompanies the Israelites through the principal part of their toilsome journey. This miraculous production of water from the rock is an expressive type of the redemption which we have in CHRIST, who was "smitten for our transgression;" (Is. lxii. 8;) and from whose side flowed a stream of "water and blood," (John xix. 34,) to cleanse us from sin, to heal our infirmities, and to refresh us in our journey through this wilderness.

During the stay of the Israelites in Rephidim, and while they were faint and weary, the Amalekites came in a treacherous manner, and smote that part of the camp which was incapable of making any resistance. This base and cowardly conduct in men who had sustained no injury, and who were besides nearly related to the seed of Jacob, being the lineal descendants of Esau, roused the resentment of Moses, who despatched Joshua, with a chosen band, to attack them. While the ardent warriors were on the march, Moses, accompanied by Aaron and Hur, ascended a hill to see the battle, and to offer up his prayers for Israel's success. It being observed by his attendants that as long as his hands were lifted up, Israel prevailed, but that when they drooped Amalek gained the advantage, they seated him upon a stone, and each supported an arm of the venerable saint, so that he being thus eased and kept steady the Israelites acquired new vigor, and the Amalekites were overthrown. Exod xvii. 8—15.

What an encouragement is this that we should "pray and not faint!" Were the efficacy of prayer more valued than it is, how constant should we be in our closet devotions, how fervent in spirit, and how strengthened in our spiritual warfare!

The prayers of the righteous avail much, even for public and national blessings. The poor and obscure Christian has an equal interest in heaven with those who are honorable and distinguished, and his zealous and sincere supplications may have an effect of which he knows nothing now, but which shall be clearly revealed unto him for his crown of rejoicing hereafter.

When the Israelites returned from the battle the victory was duly improved by religious adoration; an altar was erected; thanksgivings were offered; and the place was solemnly consecrated in the name of JEHOVAH NISSI, "the LORD my banner."

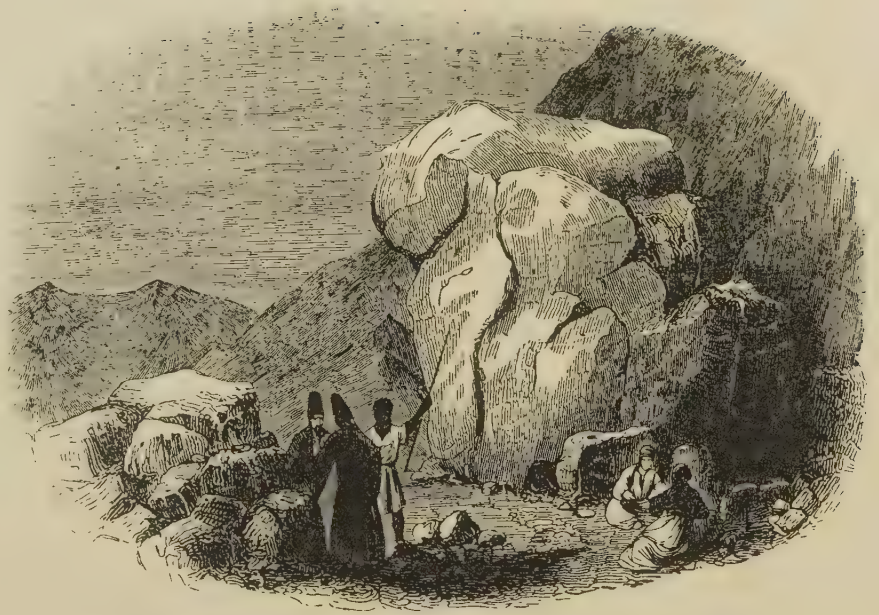
The history of Moses is, for the greatest part of it, the history of his nation; but we are now to view him attending the concerns of his family, and discharging some of the amiable duties of private life.

During his arduous mission in Egypt, his wife and children had prudently been placed under the protection of Jethro in Midian; and that excellent man, hearing that the children of Israel were arrived in his neighborhood, went to see his son-in-law, taking with him his daughter and grandchildren. The interview was affectionate on both sides, and Moses, after making public obeisance to Jethro, took him into his tent, where he related to him all that had "happened for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them in the way, and how the LORD delivered them." Exod. xviii. 8.

Jethro, with that pure and generous sympathy which ever animates good and great minds at the prosperity of their brethren, "rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel." It gladdened his heart that the seed of Jacob were rescued from bondage, and that the power and goodness of Jehovah were so highly and visibly exalted in their redemption.

Jethro, however, was not content with "blessing GOD" in the tent of Moses, but went out in the presence of all Israel, and, in his priestly capacity, offered a solemn sacrifice unto GOD, whence it is evident, that the true faith and worship had been preserved in his family. After the sacrifice, "Aaron and the elders of Israel came and did eat bread with the father-in-law of Moses," (Exod. xviii. 12,) which custom of feasting upon, or after sacrifices, indicated a covenant of amity among the parties, as the preceding service did a solemn covenant with GOD.

By the advice of Jethro, Moses appointed subordinate magistrates or judges to hear and determine causes among the people, reserving to himself the decision of those which were complex and difficult. The measure was most judicious, and nothing can show the profound wisdom and virtue of this excellent prince more strongly, than the advice which he gave to Moses on the choice of proper persons to fill this important office.



ROCK, CALLED BY THE ARABS, "STONE OF MOSES," IN A VALLEY OF SINAI.

"Thou shalt provide," says he, "out of all the people, *able men*, such as *fear* GOD, men of *truth*, hating covetousness." Exod. v. 21.

If we have cause to admire the sagacity of Jethro as a legislator, certainly we have no less cause to esteem Moses for his humility in being guided by his counsel. How few are there in high stations, who will patiently learn of other men; or who will submit their understandings to be enlightened and directed by those of inferior rank. Jethro was indeed a Midianitish prince, but then he was the head of a small tribe compared to Israel; Moses was "king in Jeshurun," (Deut. xxxiii. 5,) leader of the chosen seed, learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and the peculiar messenger of JEHOVAH. Notwithstanding these high distinctions, we see Moses attending gratefully to the counsels of his father-in-law; and immediately putting into effect the plan recommended by him for the administration of justice. In this conduct of Moses, we perceive a striking illustration of the important maxim, that none are fit to teach or rule others, who are not at the same time willing to learn and obey.

THE MOUNTAIN AND PLAIN OF SINAI.

On the departure of Jethro the Israelites removed to the foot of Mount Sinai, where they pitched their camp, agreeably to the divine declaration made to Moses at the bush; "Certainly I will be with thee, and this shall be a token that I have sent thee; when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt ye shall serve GOD in this mountain." Exod. iii. 12.

The miraculous column which had hitherto guided them, now removed to the summit of the mountain, whither Moses repaired to receive the commands of JEHOVAH. On his return he convened the elders of the people, and informed them that the ALMIGHTY, who had so powerfully delivered them from their oppressors, and had "borne them tenderly in their progress as it were upon eagles' wings," (Exod. xix. 4,) now proposed to take them into covenant with himself, and to make them "his peculiar treasure above all people; a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," provided they would hearken to his voice, and obey the statutes which he should give them.

JEHOVAH might doubtless have enforced his laws upon the Israelites, and have exacted their obedience without such a contract; but he chose to have a willing people, and not slaves for his subjects. He compels none by an irresistible force to enter into his service; he lays no restraint upon the human will to make it obedient to his commandments; nor has he hedged up the passages to eternal life and eternal death within certain adamantine decrees.

The Israelites received the proposal with gratitude and joy, exclaiming as with one voice, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do."

THE APPROACH OF THE ISRAELITES TO MOUNT SINAI.

Three days were then employed in sanctifying the people, and in preparing them for the solemn proclamation of those statutes, by which they were to regulate their conduct both to GOD and man. Their very clothes were to be washed, that none of the contamination of Egypt might appear upon them; and that the people might be filled with a just apprehension of the holiness of JEHOVAH, and of that inward preparation which he requires in those who approach his presence.

A barrier was placed round the mount, to keep off both man and beast from intruding upon the holy ground; and so strict was the divine injunction, that even to touch any part of the sacred enclosure, incurred instant death to the offender.

On the morning of the third day, and the fiftieth from the institution of the passover, Sinai exhibited the most tremendous appearances. The presence of JEHOVAH was ushered in by a fearful agitation of the elements. The holy mountain shook to its very foundation, and emitted immense volumes of flame and smoke; the air was rent by violent claps of thunder, sheets of vivid fire glared through the atmosphere, and the confusion was rendered still more terrifying by the loud roaring of the celestial trumpet. Well might the Israelites tremble at beholding this awful scene, and in hearing the voice of GOD speaking with Moses. It was indeed a sight so terribly magnificent, that the man of GOD himself was afraid, and said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." Heb. xii. 21.

Now if the promulgation of the law from Mount Sinai was attended with such strict prohibitions, and such terrifying circumstances, what will be the solemnity of that more tremendous day, when GOD shall descend in judgment to punish the violators of it?

The ten commandments were delivered with all this grandeur, from the top of a mountain, in the presence of all the people, and with the sound of a trumpet, to de-

LEVITICAL TRUMPETER.

note the immutability and universality of the law of GOD. The judicial and ceremonial statutes were given rather privately to Moses, because they were to be of limited duration; but the MORAL LAW was proclaimed aloud, to show that it concerns all men, and is of perpetual obligation. The judicial law was adapted to the peculiar case and circumstances of Israel, as a people just emerged from slavery, and under the immediate government of GOD, consequently not obligatory upon other nations, though in many points highly deserving of imitation. The ceremonial law was a mere shadowy representation of the great mystery of redemption, by the incarnation and sufferings of a Mediator, as the one full and perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. In allusion to this great event, and to show that "without shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin," (Heb. ix. 22,) Moses builds an altar at the foot of the hill, and sets up "twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel;" after which he offers a solemn sacrifice to the LORD, and with the blood of the victim sprinkles both the altar and the representatives of the people.

Who sees not in Moses, while standing thus between GOD and the people, a lively emblem of Him who in the fulness of time "came to fulfil the law and the prophets," and to offer up in his own person an atonement for the transgressions of his people?

Who can contemplate the numerous rites of the Mosaic institution, the tabernacle service, the solemn passover, the shedding of blood, the sprinkling of the altar and of the people, the mediatorial character of the high priest, the significant emblem of the Scape Goat laden with imputed guilt, and question the great Christian doctrine of

AARON WITH THE SCAPEGOAT. Showing the Costume of the High Priest and Levites.

atonement? How absurd are all these ordinances, if they are not considered as prefigurations of the REDEEMER, who came to rescue us from worse than Egyptian bondage, to be our very paschal lamb, the high priest of our profession, the mediator between GOD and man, the reconciler of heaven and earth, the "bearer of our iniquities, and the captain of our salvation made perfect through sufferings." Isa. liii. 6.

Taken in this view, as "the shadows of good things to come," (Heb. x. 1,) the services of the Old Testament are beautiful and instructive; but in any other they are obscure, perplexing, and unsatisfactory. Take the doctrine of satisfaction and atonement as the key, and then all the dark and mysterious passages, institutions, and prophecies of the Old Testament become plain and easy.

The elders of Israel being thus solemnly prepared by the sprinkling of the sacrificia

THE HIGH PRIEST IN HIS ROBES AND BREASTPLATE, AND A PRIEST IN THE ORDINARY DRESS OF THE TEMPLE SERVICE.

blood, accompanied Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, within the sacred enclosure and obtained a sight of the glory of JEHOVAH; but Moses was commanded to enter into the cloud, and to receive the laws and ordinances which were ordained for the government of Israel. There he remained forty days and forty nights, holding familiar intercourse with the ALMIGHTY, and instructed by him in all things that related to the civil polity and religious service of the nation placed under his care. At the conclusion of this conference, Moses received two tables of stone, on which were inscribed the ten commandments, written with the finger of GOD himself. This is the earliest account we have of literal writing, for though learning was in high reputation among the Egyptians, yet they had no other method of perpetuating the knowledge of things, than by hieroglyphics.

During the absence of Moses, the rebellious and idolatrous spirit of the people burst forth into an act of profaneness, that could hardly have been expected in men who had the terrors of Sinai before them, "Up," say they, "make us gods which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him."

Full of their impious project, the infatuated multitude gathered round Aaron, and insisted upon his making them gods similar to what they had been accustomed to in Egypt.

The contemptuous and ungrateful manner in which they mention their generous leader, may well excite our indignation; but we can not help shuddering at the impious return which they make to JEHOVAH, for the wonders he has wrought in their behalf, and for the blessings he has showered upon them.

It is surprising that no resistance was made by Aaron to this wicked and foolish demand; neither do we read that he urged a single remonstrance against it. But it seems his fears were great, and seeing that the people were "bent on mischief," he complied with their desire, and having stripped them of their golden ornaments, he made thereof a "molten calf," the ordinary idol of Egypt. Before this image Aaron built an altar, and proclaimed "a feast unto the LORD." When the people beheld the glittering idol, "they offered burnt-offerings and brought peace-offerings unto it," and said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." They had seen the power of JEHOVAH displayed in numerous instances, and the gods of Egypt, and those who put their trust in them, confounded, yet so stupid were they as to deify the work of human hands, and to pay divine honors to it, on the very spot where they had lately entered into a solemn covenant with the Maker of heaven and earth.

But when we condemn the sottish conduct of Israel, let us examine our own. How many times have we set up idols in our hearts, and sacrificed our affections and talents to them in opposition to the will of GOD! How often have we violated the covenant by which we were bound in the day of our conversion! And how ungratefully have we behaved to him who died to redeem us from eternal death, and rose again that we might have an admission into the land of immortal rest and glory!

Israel of old is but a picture of ourselves, and in its deliverance, progress, and rebellions, we may behold a lively representation of what has been done for our redemption by JESUS CHRIST, and what base returns we have made to him for it.

It is said, that after the people had done sacrificing to the idols, they sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." From the last expression, it is supposed that they were guilty of the most shameful acts of debauchery, such as were common among the heathen nations after their religious services. Infidelity and immorality are generally united: and when a man renounces his allegiance to GOD, he becomes capable of any wickedness.

Religious error is more dangerous than is generally imagined, for where principles are bad, practice can not be good. Sound faith will produce a dread and an abhorrence of sin; but a corrupt creed is usually the source of a lax morality, error having a natural tendency to accommodate all things, not to the will of GOD, but to the will of man.

We must now leave the guilty multitude in the valley, and ascend to the holy sanctuary on the mount. Moses, on receiving the tables of the law, was about to return to his charge, when the ALMIGHTY informed him of the dreadful scene below. The dialogue which passed between JEHOVAH and his servant is extremely interesting, and exhibits the character of Moses in the most amiable point of view.

WORSHIP OF THE GOLDEN CALF.

"And the LORD said unto him, I have seen this people, and behold it is a stiff-necked people: now, therefore, let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation." Exod. xxxii. 9, 10.

Here was an offer held out highly tempting to an ambitious mind; but Moses was above all selfish considerations, and his regard for Israel, notwithstanding the base ingratitude which he had experienced, was truly paternal. He had besides a deep concern for the honor of JEHOVAH, who had engaged to lead the people from the house of bondage, to the land promised unto their fathers. "Wherefore," says he, "should the Egyptians say, For mischief did the LORD bring them out to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?" Exod. xxxii. 12. We see here that his zeal for the glory of GOD, and his love to the people committed to his charge, were above all regard for himself, or for the honor and aggrandizement of his family.

His solicitations prevailed with the ALMIGHTY, and Moses descended from the mountain with a heart lightened in a considerable degree of its burden, though still grievously distressed at the folly of Israel. On approaching the camp, he perceived the infatuated multitude dancing round their insensible deity to the sound of music, and the sight filled him with so much indignation, that he cast the precious tables from his hands, and broke them to pieces.

The zeal with which he was inspired, enabled him to face the whole congregation with majestic authority, and to seize the golden idol, which he reduced to powder. Then casting the metal into water, he compelled the stupid worshippers to drink it, thus converting their sin into a shameful punishment.

Nor was Aaron suffered to pass without a severe reproof for his cowardice, though he endeavored to excuse his conduct by urging the violent spirit of the people. How different was his behavior from that of his exalted brother, who singly opposed a whole nation, and bravely asserted the honor of JEHOVAH in the midst of a numerous assembly, performing religious services to an image of gold!

Though the prayer of Moses prevailed in preventing the utter extirpation of Israel, yet so flagrant a rebellion against the LORD was not to be passed over without exemplary punishment. The Levites undertook this service, and with such promptitude did they execute the commission, that there fell in Israel on that fatal day about three thousand men

Again did Moses ascend the holy mountain, where he poured out the agony of his soul in the most pathetic terms, confessing the sin of which the people had been guilty to be most heinous, but with his usual earnestness soliciting forgiveness for them, adding at the same time this remarkable request to his prayer for their pardon; "If not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." Exod. xxxii. 32.

Some persons have rashly concluded that Moses here prayed to be cut off from divine favor, rather than that Israel should not be forgiven.

The same absurd interpretation has been given of a similar expression, made use of by St. Paul concerning the Jews of his day: "For I could wish," says the apostle, "that myself were accursed from CHRIST for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." Rom. ix. 3.

But after all that high-strained enthusiasm can make of these strong phrases, they amount to no more than to such a fervent desire in Moses and St. Paul for the welfare of Israel, as to make them willing to lay down their own lives for the promotion of it, agreeably to what our SAVIOUR says: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John xv. 13.

In answer to the prayer of Moses, GOD says, "Whosoever hath sinned against me him will I blot out of my book;" and the event answered the declaration, for all that idolatrous generation perished in the wilderness, and did not enter into the land of promise, covenanted to the seed of Abraham.

The mediation of Moses in behalf of the people was not only effectual in obtaining

their pardon, but also the continuance of JEHOVAH's presence with them, as their conductor, a favor which they had justly forfeited by their infidelity and idolatry.

Moses having succeeded in this point so interesting to his heart, proceeded to a request that at first sight appears presumptuous. "I beseech thee," says he to JEHOVAH, "show me thy glory." Exod. xxxiii. 18. Do we not tremble at this high demand in sinful dust and ashes, when we know that the leaders of the celestial hierarchies themselves veil their faces with their wings when they approach the dazzling splendor of the throne of GOD? Who can behold the glory of GOD, and live? Yet the prayer of Moses was not displeasing to JEHOVAH. He was told indeed that the fulness of the divine majesty could not be seen by a created being; but he was favored with a glimpse of that glory which is above all conception, and he endured this partial sight of Him who is invisible. JEHOVAH hid him in a cleft of the rock, "and covered him with his hand," according to the figurative language of Scripture, "while he made his glory to pass before him."

Have we not here a striking representation of Him who is the "rock of his church," and in whose wounds believing sinners are sheltered from the "stormy wind and tempest," when the majesty of GOD ariseth in judgment upon a sinful world? Who can expect to behold the glory of GOD and live unprotected by the merits and powerful intercession of the REDEEMER? But thus secured we shall endure the beatific vision, and stand with boldness before the celestial throne. "Behold I lay in Zion," says he, "for a foundation, a STONE, A TRIED STONE, a precious CORNER STONE, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste." Isa. xxviii. 16.

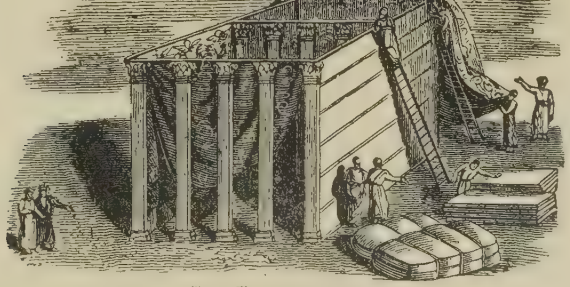
To every sinner, therefore, should be addressed this emphatic and encouraging exhortation of the evangelical prophet: "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for the fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty." Isa. ii. 10.

After this Moses ascended Sinai again, taking with him two tables of stone instead of those which he had destroyed, and the holy immutable law was once more inscribed by the finger of JEHOVAH.

The solemn covenant of amity was renewed between GOD and his people, and Moses remained forty days and forty nights in the mountain, during which time he was instructed in all that pertained to the regulation of the Jewish polity. When he returned to the camp, his countenance shone with such brightness, that no one could endure to look upon him, on which account he was obliged to cover his face with a veil. But Moses himself was ignorant of the glory which rested upon him; for those who are the nearest in communion with GOD, are always the least sensible of their own graces. To others their excellences shine forth with great lustre, but they do not themselves feel any sense of their own superiority.

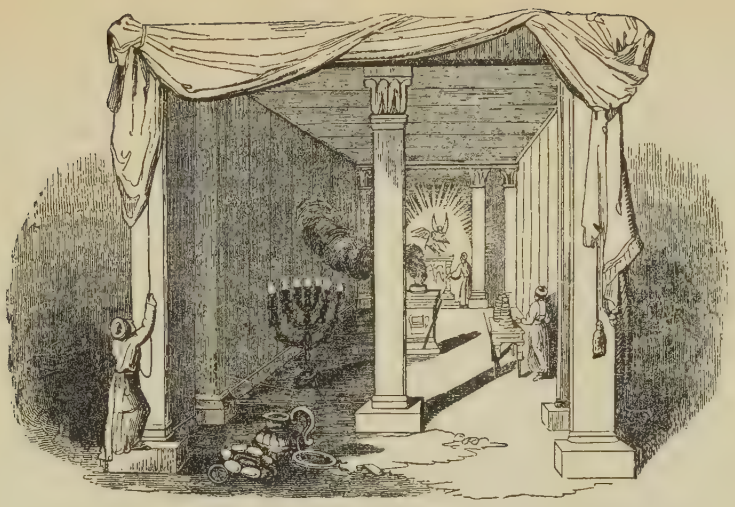
The life of Moses was extremely active, and when we consider his great age, at the time that he was so busily employed in the formation of the Israelitish constitution, we have cause to wonder no less at his exertions than his patience. But his communion with JEHOVAH certainly strengthened his bodily frame, and invigorated his faculties, at the same time that it spiritualized and enlarged his mind.

It would be pleasing, and it would be no less profitable, to enter into a minute description of the tabernacle, and of the various parts of its ritual, together with all the



THE TABERNACLE.

MOSES.



INTERIOR OF THE TABERNACLE. The Veil between the Holy Places removed.

institutions, civil and religious, which took place after the last descent of Moses from the mount. But these things belong rather to the history of Israel as a nation, than to the life of Moses, though he was the honored instrument employed by Heaven for their establishment. It is enough to say that "he was found faithful in all his house," (Heb. iii. 5,) or that he made everything perfect according to the pattern given to him in the mount; and that he fulfilled his commission in such a manner as showed that he had no regard to his own ease or honor, but to the glory of GOD, and to the good of his brethren.

Year of the World, 2514.

From Sinai the Israelites marched into the wilderness of Paran, where they soon fell into their old spirit of rebellion; and though the particulars are not recorded, the provocation must have been great, since the fire of the LORD descended and consumed numbers of them. Here again Moses acted as a mediator, and by his intercession the dreadful judgment was removed.

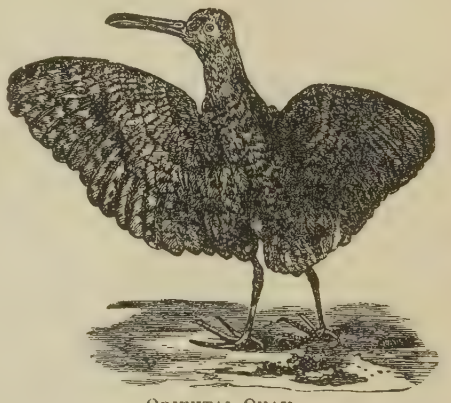
But judgments and mercies were not long regarded by this perverse and ungrateful nation. The "mixed multitude" loathed the heavenly food, and as they approached Egypt, they began to long after its luxuries. Their discontent infected the Israelites, and they also murmured against the bread of GOD, as being of too simple a quality. "We remember," say they, "the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely: the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlics: but now our soul is dried away, there is nothing at all besides *this manna* before our eyes." Num. xi. 5, 6. All the blessings of GOD were forgotten by this unthankful nation, and even their wretched condition in bondage was not thought of by them, while they remembered the dainties of Egypt. Their grovelling minds preferred a state of slavery the most abject, provided their sensual appetites could be gratified, to a life of mere dependance upon the goodness of GOD. And are not we more fond of the carnal food of this Egypt, this state of sin and bondage, than of the "bread of life" which came down from heaven? John vi. 51. Instead of "learning with the apostle to be content in whatever state we are placed" (Philip. iv. 11) by Divine Providence, and nourishing our souls with spiritual food, are not our affections set upon the perishing things of this life, and do we not murmur and complain if GOD in his goodness and wisdom deprives us of them?

Let the story of the Israelites teach us to mortify our sensual desires, and to be resigned to the will of GOD with thankful hearts, although the high-seasoned viands of this world, its riches, honors, and pleasures are placed beyond our reach.

These discontents of the people greatly distressed the soul of Moses, and he complained to the LORD, that the burden of governing them alone was too great for him to bear. The ALMIGHTY compassionated the condition of his servant, and directed him to appoint a judicial court, consisting of seventy elders. This appears to have been the origin of the Jewish Sanhedrim, or the supreme seat of judgment, which continued till the time of CHRIST, possessed of high powers, though under the Romans its authority was considerably lessened. On these seventy persons the spirit of prophecy was poured out, or such a portion of wisdom was given unto them as was necessary to qualify them for that arduous office to which they were called. A remarkable circumstance occurred on this occasion which throws additional lustre upon the character of the Jewish legislator. After he had chosen the members of the supreme court, he was informed that the prophetic spirit had rested upon two young men in the camp, named Eldad and Medad. When the news was communicated to Moses, Joshua, who had a warm zeal for his master's honor, which he considered as infringed by this act, said to him, "My lord Moses, forbid them." The answer of the venerable minister of GOD was most exalted, and shows a mind superior to all jealousy: "Enviest thou for my sake? Would GOD that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his Spirit upon them." Numb. xi. 29.

The good man rejoiced to see the outpouring of the Spirit upon the people, for he was convinced that the more divine wisdom was spread abroad, the temper and manners of the nation would be improved thereby.

We have remarked the discontent of the "mixed multitude and the Israelites," for the want of flesh, and their contemptuous treatment of the bread of heaven. The LORD promised Moses that he would comply with their desires, and he accordingly caused prodigious flocks of quails, or, as some will have it, locusts, to fall round about their camp; but while they were eagerly enjoying what they had so insolently demanded, the anger of the LORD was kindled, and multitudes of them perished. From hence we learn, that inordinate desires, though sometimes complied with, and satisfied by Heaven, do not therefore go unpunished: on the contrary, they are often punished by being complied with.



ORIENTAL QUAIL.

The blessings chosen for us by GOD are blessings indeed, and like the manna, bring no sorrow with them; but when we choose for ourselves, and are so unhappy as to be gratified in that choice, our portion too often proves a curse; and while the much loved morsel is yet between our teeth, "the wrath of GOD comes upon us," for making a wrong choice. This will always be the case in the end, whenever earth is preferred to heaven, and sense to faith.

Not long after this judgment, Moses was attacked from a quarter the least expected, and upon a ground the most unwarrantable. Miriam and Aaron, thinking they did not possess that degree of authority to which they were entitled, murmured against their brother, saying, "Hath the LORD spoken only by Moses, hath he not also spoken by us?" Envious and dissatisfied minds will have recourse to the most absurd means to gratify their spleen. Not knowing what else to allege against Moses, his brother and sister reproached him for having married an Æthiopian woman, a circumstance which had happened many years before, and which was not disapproved of by the ALMIGHTY, to whom alone he was accountable for his actions. Moses made no reply to the cruel reproaches of his relations, whose baseness he was not willing to expose to the people. Well, therefore, is it remarked in this part of his story, "that the man Moses was meek above all the men upon the face of the earth;" and it certainly manifested a most forbearing spirit to endure, without resentment, such treatment from his own kindred. But the ALMIGHTY took the determination of the cause into his own hand, and as Miriam was the aggressor in this sedition, she was smitten with a le-

prosy. Aaron, alarmed at this dreadful calamity, submitted in the most humiliating terms to his brother, and earnestly entreated him to mediate in behalf of their sister. The prayer of Moses was heard; and after being shut out of the camp seven days, as a public example, Miriam was restored to health, and received into the congregation.

On approaching the confines of Palestine, Moses selected from the different tribes twelve persons to spy the land, and to discover its quality and strength. The return of these men must have been anxiously looked for by a people who had been so long wanderers in the desert; but what must have been the astonishment of the Israelites when ten of the spies brought an evil report of the country, representing it as not only incapable of supporting its inhabitants, but as being unconquerable? Two of them, however, Caleb and Joshua, had the honesty to give a different representation; bu' the cowardly spirit of the others filled the minds of the people with despondency, and, after reproaching Moses with having deceived them by false promises, they openly declared their resolution of electing a captain from among themselves to lead them into Egypt.

In this critical dilemma Moses applied to the ALMIGHTY, who again offered to raise his family into a mighty nation, and to extirpate a people who were so little deserving of his favor.

Moses was not at all elated by this flattering proposal. His love for Israel, notwithstanding all the cruel conduct which he experienced for his care and kindness, remained as ardent as ever; and he pleaded their cause with so much earnestness, that the divine judgment was stayed, and they were preserved. But the LORD declared, that for this heinous act of rebellion and impiety, "not one of the existing generation should enter into the promised land except the two faithful spies, Caleb and Joshua." Numb. xiv. 27–30. The denunciation of this sentence had such an effect upon the people, that some of them were resolved to force their way into Canaan, in spite of the remonstrances of Moses, who freely told them, that as they were acting in opposition to the will of Heaven, they must expect to be unsuccessful. But these rash men were bent upon their mad project, and were defeated by the Canaanites with a great slaughter. The rest retreated with all haste into the wilderness, and encamped at a place called Kadesh-barnea, where another sedition took place against Moses, headed by Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who were discontented at not being put into public offices. These men were joined by two hundred and fifty others, and the conspiracy began to wear a most formidable appearance, for they were persons of considerable distinction and influence, when the ALMIGHTY again interposed on behalf of his servant. Moses, with an undaunted air, faced the rebels in the presence of the congregation, and said, "Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works, (for I have not done them of mine own mind.) If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the LORD hath not sent me: but if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down into the pit, then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD." Numb. xvi. 1–35.

The decision of this appeal was most awful; for the earth opened its jaws, and Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with their adherents, descended alive into the horrible gulf. Immediately after this a devouring flame of fire issued forth from the divine presence, which consumed the two hundred and fifty princes who had joined in the conspiracy.

Yet so refractory and callous were the hearts of the people, that the very day succeeding this fearful judgment, they had the temerity to accuse Moses with having been guilty of murdering those rebels who fell beneath the vengeance of the ALMIGHTY. Instead of resenting this cruel charge, Moses exerted himself to prevent the anger of the LORD from consuming the ungrateful nation, and he succeeded in his prayers, though not till some thousands had fallen in the plague.

When we behold Moses standing in the gap between an angry GOD and a sinful people, praying, pleading, and struggling to save them from destruction, though they had been guilty of calumniating him as a murderer, and more than once had threatened his life, we are struck with astonishment at the generous qualities of his soul. How different was his temper from that of many Christians, who, for the slightest causes, and frequently without any provocation at all, seek to injure their brethren; and if they are prevented from carrying their malice into full effect, take a pleasure in reproaching and vilifying them! And yet we have a pattern infinitely higher than that

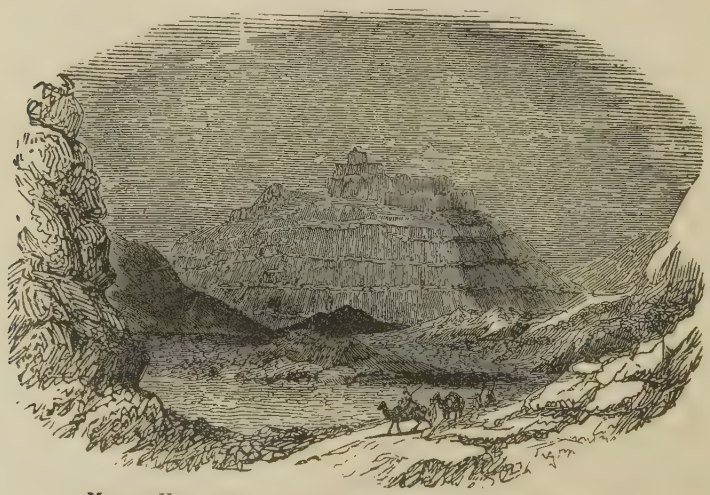
of Moses. JESUS CHRIST hath laid down his life for his enemies; when he was reproached he replied not; when he was buffeted he took it patiently; lacerated, he groaned not; crucified, he complained not, but breathed forth upon the cross this prayer for his inhuman murderers: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Luke xxiii. 33.

Let these high examples operate upon our minds in eradicating thence all wrath and malice, envy and revenge; everything, in short, which has a tendency to lessen that love and benevolence which our holy religion strictly enjoins us to exercise one towards another as children of the same common Parent, partakers of the same infirmities, and joint heirs of the same inestimable promises.

From Kadesh-barnea the Israelites marched back to the shore of the Red Sea, and after numerous journeys, which took up a period of no less than thirty-eight years, they came to the coast of Edom, where Miriam died. Shortly after this the people pitched their camp at Rephidim, where the water, which had followed them for so long a time, failed, and they instantly broke out into bitter invectives against their leader. JEHOVAH directed Moses and Aaron to command water from the rock; but instead of fulfilling the injunction exactly, Moses was provoked at the conduct of the people, and smote the rock twice, saying, in the height of his passion, "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" Numb. xx. 10. The rock yielded to the powerful stroke, and poured forth refreshing streams in abundance; but the behavior of Moses and Aaron was so displeasing to the LORD, that he passed this sentence upon them: "Because ye believed me not to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." The offence of these good men appears to have been an intemperate resentment mixed with too much concern about their own honor, and accompanied by a want of trust in GOD.

Their language to the people, "Must WE fetch you water out of this rock?" did not become men who acted solely in the name of GOD. They failed to sanctify JEHOVAH in the presence of the congregation, by taking too much upon themselves, by speaking in their own names, and by exceeding the precise terms of their commission. Such was their offence, and so heavy was their punishment; from which we learn, that from men of superior stations, and possessed of pre-eminent talents, the ALMIGHTY expects an obedience proportioned to their advantages, and to the influence of their example. The error of Moses and Aaron was apparently trivial, when compared with the offence of Israel; but in men of their high station, and of their gifts, it was one of a most serious magnitude, and called for an exemplary punishment.

On the arrival of Israel at Mount Hor, which was their very next stage, Moses was commanded to strip Aaron of his pontifical garments, and to invest Eleazer, his son,



MOUNT HOR, WITH THE TOMB OF AARON ON THE SUMMIT.

with the office of high priest. This was a painful task, for it not only deprived him of an affectionate relative and a useful associate, but it was an evident token that the divine sentence was irrevocable.

Moses and Aaron, however, submitted to the awful mandate, and, accompanied by Eleazer, they ascended the mountain, where Aaron resigned his office to his son, and his spirit into the hands of GOD, in the year of the world 2552.

The people were greatly affected at the loss of their holy and vigilant minister, and mourned for him thirty days.

While they lay encamped at this place, king Arad, who dwelt in the south of Canaan, being jealous of their numbers, came out secretly, and took some of them prisoners. But the Israelites soon avenged themselves for this act of treachery, by laying waste all his cities. This success flushed their spirits to such a pitch, that they conceived themselves able to march at once into Canaan, and to conquer it without much difficulty. But the decree of JEHOVAH was immutable, and they were led back by the way in which they came. This mortifying disappointment produced another sedition, which was punished by a dreadful plague of fiery serpents, whose bite was death. The direful visitation had the effect of terrifying them into a momentary repentance; and they made their submission to Moses, acknowledging their sin, and imploring mercy. His prayers for them were readily offered, and they were as speedily answered, for the LORD commanded him to set up a pole with a serpent of brass thereon; "and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived." Numb. xxi. 9. This circumstance was exactly typical of that salvation which we receive by the crucifixion of JESUS CHRIST. We are all of us "bitten by the fiery serpents of sin;" and it is only by looking with an eye of faith to the REDEEMER upon the cross, as bearing our iniquities, that we can avoid eternal death. If it were possible for a Christian to doubt this elucidation of the wonderful miracle we have been noticing, let the words of our SAVIOUR himself explain it: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." John iii. 14, 15.

THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

We draw now fast to the close of this great man's life. Though he was prohibited from entering into the land of promise, he had the satisfaction to see a preparation made for the entrance of the chosen seed, by their defeating, in various successive engagements, the Amorites, Moabites, and Midianites, who came out against them. He saw that though the sentence pronounced against himself was irrevocable, yet that the promise of GOD to Israel was firm, and that the covenant made with Abraham was drawing to a fulfilment. But if the goodness of GOD afforded him joy at this season, the shameful conduct of the people grieved his heart. They conquered the heathens around them, but the idolatrous practices of those nations subdued their affections; and almost all Israel forsook JEHOVAH, and joined in the filthy services that were performed in honor of Baal-peor. The zeal of Moses was kindled on this occasion, and he commanded the ringleaders in this detestable revolt to be put to death. This was the last public act of importance in the life of this extraordinary man. We find him afterwards engaged in numbering the people, employed in settling the several portions of the tribes, and in establishing certain regulations concerning the right of inheritance. These points being determined, he received a command from JEHOVAH to "get him up unto Mount Nebo," (Deut. xxxiii. 49,) and there to leave a world of sin and care for a land of eternal rest and glory. But the soul of Moses was still anxiously set upon the good of perverse, rebellious, and ungrateful Israel. He would fain have conducted them into the good land, and prayed earnestly to be indulged in that desire, but when he found that the word of GOD was immutably fixed, he submitted to the divine will, and only prayed that an able and pious leader might be appointed to succeed him His request was acceptable to GOD, and he had the satisfaction of present-

ing his servant Joshua, at the divine command, to the high priest Eleazer, to be consecrated to this great charge. In the appointment of Joshua, who does not perceive, and who will not acknowledge, the most exalted disinterestedness in Moses, who could suffer the whole of his own family to sink into the obscurity of private citizens, and consecrate for his successor one of another tribe?

The few remaining days of his life were spent in setting before the people their manifold obligations to GOD, who had done such mighty things for them, in exhortations to obedience, in pronouncing blessings, like Jacob, on the respective tribes, and in uttering some striking prophecies of their future condition. One of his predictions is too remarkable to be passed over without notice. It is that where he points strongly to the MESSIAH: "The LORD thy GOD will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." Deut. xviii. 15. This was an express declaration that the institutions of Moses were to last no longer than till the coming of this greater prophet. And this we know, that since the advent of CHRIST the Mosaic ritual hath failed, the judicial law has been destroyed, and the ceremonial one abrogated. The Jews have neither had a king nor a sacrifice, and the gospel of CHRIST has succeeded to the law of Moses.

When the man of GOD had taken his last, solemn, and affecting leave of the people, he ascended the mountain, and from Pisgah he beheld the fertile plains of Canaan. Though a hundred and twenty years old, "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." At this advanced period his mental faculties were in their full vigor, and his last sayings show a judgment, a fire, and an energy equal to any compositions in the sacred volume. Having feasted his eyes with a sight of the land of promise, he closed them on all worldly objects, and experienced

A death-like sleep,
A gentle wafting to immortal life.

The burial of Moses is a remarkable incident in Scripture, and there are circumstances recorded concerning it so extraordinary, that perhaps no satisfactory conjecture can be formed on the subject. It is said that the "LORD buried the body in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor; and no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." Deut. xxxiv. 6. St. Jude observes: "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, (he disputed about the body of Moses,) durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The LORD rebuke thee." Jude 9. Whatever may be made of these obscure expressions, it appears clear that the body of this great man was secretly interred, that the people might not be induced, in imitation of the heathens, to perform religious rites at his tomb.

The character of Moses has been so fully and minutely depicted in this account of his life, that it is unnecessary to enter into a review of it. If he was timid in accepting the important charge to which the LORD called him, he was courageous and indefatigable in fulfilling it afterwards. His behavior before Pharaoh shows a most intrepid mind; and his conduct while he led the Israelites in the wilderness, indicates generosity, tenderness, piety, zeal, and, above all, that eminent quality, "meekness."

In Moses we have another type of the blessed REDEEMER, for as he rescued the chosen seed from the house of bondage, so has JESUS broken the chains of our captivity, and led us forth from the prison-house into the "liberty of the sons of GOD." Moses was a PROPHET, PRIEST, and KING, and so is CHRIST unto his church.

He instructs his people in the divine will, and gives them directions during their pilgrimage in this wilderness, and promises to console them in all their difficulties. As a priest he mediates on their behalf at the right hand of the throne of GOD, and presents his own merits and sacrifice as an atonement for their sins. He is "King of kings and LORD of lords," being the Creator of heaven and earth; but he is also "King in Zion," and rules in and over his people in righteousness. Moses fasted forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, and so did our REDEEMER when he was tried by the tempter, and came off conqueror. Moses could not lead the people into Canaan; neither can the law bring any sinner unto GOD. Here the SAVIOUR rises superior to the Jewish legislator, for he not only conducts his church safely through the wilderness, but carries it triumphantly into heaven. "Thus the law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by JESUS CHRIST." John i. 17.

PRESENT INHABITANTS OF MOUNT SINAI.

BALAAM.

SLAIN BY THE ISRAELITES IN THE YEAR OF THE WORLD 2552.

BASER passion affects not the human heart than an inordinate love of riches. Other evil propensities may be corrected by frequent disappointments, or become tiresome by too much indulgence; but avarice is checked by no impediments, and increases as fast as wealth accumulates. It takes such fast hold of the mind, that when the senses decay, and man totters on the brink of the grave, he still grasps his beloved mammon with eagerness, as though it were to be his god in eternity, as it has been in time. This debasing principle deadens every generous feeling, blunts the common sensations of humanity, renders the heart insensible to every tender impression, and has a direct tendency to destroy all regard for religious as well as for social duty.

In the Scripture history we have numerous instances of the baneful effects of this passion, some of which we have already considered; but we are now to contemplate one which is peculiarly remarkable, as showing how far the love of gain will carry a man even against the special warnings of Providence, the light of divine inspiration, and the powerful convictions of his own conscience.

The Israelites, during their progress in the wilderness, excited no small uneasiness among those nations on whose borders they occasionly encamped. The wonders which had been wrought on their behalf in Egypt and at the Red Sea were universally known, and filled the minds of those who heard of them with astonishment and dread. A people so distinguished by Heaven were not likely to continue always in an erratic state, and, therefore, the countries round them were naturally afraid of falling beneath their power. The prophecy of their aggrandizement and settlement in Canaan could not be unknown to the Moabites and Edomites, for the latter were the immediate descendants of Esau, and the former of Lot. All things, then, conspired to render these powers, as well as their neighbors, jealous of a people, whom all the force of haughty Egypt could not subdue. After the defeat of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, the Israelites marched to the borders of Moab, which greatly alarmed Balak, who reigned over that country. Here they pitched their camp, and neither showed nor intended any act of hostility, because they regarded the Moabites as their brethren. Had Balak possessed any prudent and generous qualities, he would have courted the alliance of this extraordinary people. Or if he had been truly courageous, he would have marched out boldly against them, and have endeavored to drive the formidable intruders from his dominions. But Balak was mean, suspicious, and cowardly. He was also, as men of his character frequently are, extremely superstitious. Not daring to trust to the number or valor of his troops, he had recourse to magical arts against his enemies; a practice common in that age, and not in that only, but in those of a later date, and among nations of greater wisdom and renown. It was an early belief that necromancers could control the invisible powers, and by their assistance bring down blessings and curses upon mankind. This popular superstition has spread itself over all the earth, and prevailed among nations the most remote from each other. Nor has it quite lost its ground in those countries which have been blest by the cheer-

ing and instructive rays of Christianity, for even in them the false tales of enchantment and of witchcraft make so deep an impression upon the mind in childhood, as scarcely to be eradicated when reason assumes her dominion over it.

Balak, who had the most terrifying apprehensions of the potency of Israel's God, would not trust to the skill and wisdom of his own enchanters, but hearing of the fame of Balaam, the son of Beor, or Bosor, who dwelt at Pethor, in Mesopotamia, he resolved upon sending an embassy to invite him to his court. The message which he sent sufficiently expresses the fears by which Balak was actuated, and the miserable superstition which darkened his mind. "Behold," says he, "there is a people come out from Egypt; behold they cover the face of the earth; and they abide over against me. Come now, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people, for they are too mighty for me; peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed." Numb. xxii. 5, 6.

Most of the Jewish and Christian commentators represent Balaam as an idolater; but certainly not upon satisfactory grounds. He appears rather to have been a prophet and a priest, for he makes use of the tremendous name of GOD; he consults him as one who had frequently received divine communications, and in his interview with Balak he offers sacrifices to JEHOVAH in a sacerdotal manner. But Balaam was covetous, and living among nations who put an implicit confidence in the power of enchantments, he blended that profession with the worship of the true GOD. Nor does it derogate from the majesty, wisdom, and goodness of JEHOVAH, that he should condescend to make use of such an instrument. We find Caiaphas, the bigoted and cruel high priest, to the examination of our SAVIOUR, uttering a prophecy, of the exact import of which he was himself unconscious. There was also a covetous traitor among the apostles, who had doubtless preached the gospel of his Master, and possessed the power of working miracles in common with his brethren. It is a powerful testimony in behalf of truth and innocence which comes from the mouth of an enemy; and in this view the prophecies of Balaam are of the greatest importance.

The messengers of Balak came to the house of the prophet, bearing "the rewards of divination" in their hands. The vanity of Balaam was elated by this application, and the prospect of honors and riches which it held out to him was not to be despised. He had some fear of JEHOVAH, but yet he wished to go with the messengers, for he desired them to tarry with him that night, that he might inquire of the LORD whether he should comply with the desire of Balak or not.

In the night Balaam received a strict and peremptory command from the LORD not to go with the messengers, for that the people whom Balak wanted him to "curse were blessed." When morning came, he reluctantly dismissed the men with an answer which sufficiently showed that he had the inclination, though not the power, to accompany them. Instead of a free and honest declaration of what he had received from GOD, he said, "The LORD refuseth to let me go with you." Had he told them that Israel was blessed, and that he could on no account whatsoever execrate the favored of Heaven, probably the king of Moab would not have sent to him a second time; but Balaam was not willing to offend Balak by informing him of the truth, and the complaisant ambassadors, equally as willing to please their master, altered even the prophet's concise answer, saying, "Balaam refuseth to come with us." It was natural then for Balak to suppose that Balaam was displeased at not having had a more splendid embassy, or that he stood out for higher terms than what had been offered him. Possessed of this idea, and more eager to obtain his object, he despatched instantly a more honorable and numerous deputation than the former, consisting of the first princes of his court, and proffering to the covetous prophet profuse riches and high distinctions. His answer to these messengers would have been admirable, if his actions had been consistent. "If Balak," says he, "would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my GOD, to do less or more." Numb. xviii. Now if he had possessed any real piety, or had been more zealous for the honor of GOD than he was eager for his own ends, he would have dismissed the ambassadors at once upon the strength of the declaration which he had already received. But Balaam was willing to try whether the ALMIGHTY could not be prevailed upon to give him leave to visit the king of Moab, and therefore desired these ambassadors to tarry also with him that night. The LORD, who saw into the desires which lurked in his heart, gave him a permission to follow his inclination, or rather left him

to pursue it, only laying this restriction upon him to speak as he should be directed. Overjoyed at having obtained his object, Balaam rose up betimes in the morning, eager to earn and to receive the "wages of unrighteousness."

Behold Balaam posting on in his sinful journey, counting perhaps his gains, meditating upon the honors he should receive, and never once thinking upon the injustice of the business in which he was engaged.

As he was on his journey, the ALMIGHTY gave him another and still more remarkable sign that his conduct was displeasing in his sight. The angel of JEHOVAH appeared in the way with a drawn sword in his hand, but the faculties of Balaam were intent upon worldly objects, and he beheld not the apparition. The ass on which he rode alone saw the tremendous vision, and to avoid it, turned aside into a field, which so provoked the prophet, that he smote her with his staff. The angel next appeared to oppose the progress of Balaam in a narrow way, which led through some vineyards, having a wall on each hand; here the ass again attempted to save her master by turning aside, and thereby crushed his foot against the wall. This roused his fury against the poor animal into greater violence, and he smote her with his staff with extreme severity. On coming to a pass still narrower than the former, the angel made a full stand, and the ass, perceiving that it was impossible to avoid him, fell down beneath Balaam, who with savage ferocity laid on his blows with redoubled violence. The ALMIGHTY then opened the mouth of the injured animal, and gave her power to remonstrate with the infatuated prophet on the cruelty of his conduct. But Balaam, instead of perceiving the finger of GOD in this mysterious transaction, and calling his sin to remembrance, was proof against even the power of miracles, and expressed a wish that he had a sword in his hand to slay the faithful beast which had saved his life. The messenger of JEHOVAH now made himself visible unto him, and the terrified prophet immediately fell on his face to the earth. Before the angel proceeds to declare the purport of his mission, he charges Balaam with cruelty to the poor and defenceless animal on which he rode. "Wherefore has thou smitten thine ass these three times?" Numb. xxxii. Does the ALMIGHTY then take pity on the low and despised part of the brute creation? Will he bring into judgment those acts of cruelty which insolent man commits upon the dumb and defenceless, however contemptible and insignificant they apparently may be? Let this incident in the story of Balaam convince us that he does take cognizance of such actions, and that he will one day make an exact inquiry concerning them. "A righteous man regardeth the life of," or is tender to, "his beast; but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." Prov. xii. 10.

Balaam was convinced now that his eagerness to undertake this journey was offensive to the ALMIGHTY, and being filled with terror by the flaming vision before him, offered to return; but it was in terms which plainly showed that he wished rather to proceed. "Now, therefore," says he, "if it displease thee, I will get me back again." The angel, perceiving the sinfulness of his heart, left him to his own inclination, but laid a powerful command upon him not to speak a word more nor less than as he should be directed from above.

This circumstance has occasioned considerable speculation, and no little degree of ridicule, according to the principles of different writers. Some commentators have turned the whole into allegory, or parable, or vision; and they might, if they had pleased, with equal propriety, have made a fable or a dream of the whole history. Moses tells the story with as much plainness, perspicuity, and soberness, as he does any other in the sacred books; on what account, therefore, have we a right to depart from the literal construction of the relation? But is there anything absurd in this miracle, anything beneath the dignity of GOD, or inconsistent with the whole narrative? Far to the contrary. An ass may be proverbially stupid among men, but she is yet a part of GOD'S creation, and she appears to have been fitly chosen on this occasion to "rebuke," as St. Peter expresses it, "the madness of the prophet." 2 Pet. ii. 16. Reason is supernaturally bestowed upon the dullest of quadrupeds, that an oracle of wisdom may be confounded. The remonstrance of the ass is consistent, being not upon the conduct of Balaam as a prophet, but as a master; not upon his disobedience of GOD, but upon his wanton cruelty to herself. Now what is there in this miracle that can make it an object of ridicule, or to raise a just objection to the truth of the sacred history? Is anything too hard for the ALMIGHTY, or is he to be tied down to such a mode of performing miracles as we shall conceive to be consistent? Is it more difficult, or is it more absurd, to give a human voice and reason for a moment to an ass,

than to an idiot; and may not He who has given sight to the blind, and speech to the dumb, open the mouth of the most despised animal, to bring down the haughtiness and impiety of man?

An objection to this miracle will apply with equal force to any or all of the miracles recorded in the Old and New Testaments, and if this is given up to fanciful and fastidious criticism, or to arrogant infidelity, we may as well renounce the whole Bible at once.

Balaam, on the departure of the angel, advanced to the court of the king of Moab, who received him with great gladness, at the same time giving him a gentle rebuke for not acceding to his first request. The prophet, who had the sword of divine vengeance in his view, and trembled under a sense of the danger to which he had been exposed, answered Balak as he had done the messengers, that he could do no more than as GOD should direct him. The king of Moab, however, had no doubt but that he should obtain the full accomplishment of his wishes, for his dependance was upon the mercenary desires of Balaam, and not upon the GOD whom he worshipped. Not willing that any time should be lost, he took the prophet to an eminence, that from thence he might behold the camp of Israel. Here Balaam ordered that seven altars should be erected, on which he offered as many sacrifices, and then being overpowered by the constraining power of the Holy Spirit, he proclaimed, not a curse, but a blessing upon the tents of Jacob, exclaiming, at the close of it, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his," (Num. xxiii. 10,) which some judicious divines have supposed had an allusion to that violent death of which he had the presentiment. Let this be as it may, it shows that even the wicked, however unwilling they are to live the life, are yet desirous to die the death of the righteous. They would, like Balaam, enjoy the world, and its honors, and its pleasures, but when the prospect of eternity draws near, they would fain be numbered with those who have made righteousness the rule of their lives.

Balak, astonished at the conduct of Balaam, complained bitterly that he had deceived him, but the prophet again excused himself with the plea that he could not go beyond the commandment of the LORD. The king of Moab, however, would not entirely abandon his object, and therefore pressed Balaam to remove to another place, with which he as readily complied. But here also, after offering seven burnt-offerings, the constraining power of inspiration compelled him to utter a benediction instead of an execration. So strong indeed were his expressions, that the terrified Balak, who apprehended nothing less than the prediction of his own utter destruction, cried out, "Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all." But he took Balaam to another hill, where, as usual, seven sacrifices were offered, after which the prophet pronounced a prophecy of the increasing power of Israel, and the destruction of their enemies, in the most glowing terms, which so irritated and affected Balak, that, smiting his hands together, he exclaimed, "I called thee to curse mine enemies, and behold thou hast blessed them these three times. Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honor, but lo, the LORD hath kept thee back from honor." Numb. xxiv. 10, 11.

Balaam's reply was dignified; and had he not shown sufficient proofs of his venality, we might hence be led to pass a commendation upon him. But he acted not now of his own will. His ass was not more under the compulsory power of a divine agency, when she uttered the words of wisdom, than her wretched master was in this interview with Balak. "Spake I not also," says he, "unto thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying, if Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the LORD saith, that will I speak?"

Being still under the divine direction, he poured forth a prophecy concerning Israel, and the fate of the different nations around, still more emphatic, particular, and lofty, than any of his former predictions. He begins with a pointed description of the MESSIAH, who in an after age should arise from among this highly distinguished people. "I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a STAR out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." Numb. xxiv. 17. If this be true of David in some sense as a conqueror, it is still more so of the REDEEMER, who is the "bright and morning star," (Rev. xxii. 16,) "the day-spring from on high," (Luke i. 78,) the "Sun of righteousness," (Mal. iv. 2,) and the "King of Zion." Ps. ii. 6. The predic-

tion of Balaam corresponds exactly with that of the dying Jacob, and can only apply in all points to Him who hath "brought life and immortality to light by his gospel;" (2 Tim. i. 10;) who hath subdued the spiritual enemies of his church, and to whom all the kingdoms of the earth shall finally be subject.

Balaam, having finished his predictions, so mortifying to the superstition, malice, and pride of the king of Moab, was driven from his presence with contempt and indignation. But when he was left to the dictates of his own mind, the fallen prophet endeavored to regain the favor of Balak, by advising him to entice the Israelites into idolatry and licentiousness, through the meretricious attractions of the Moabitish women. He hoped by these means to render them an easy prey to their enemies; for he conceived, rightly enough, that the surest way to destroy a people is to pervert their principles, and to corrupt their manners. The counsel of Balaam was adopted, and it proved too successful, for the Israelites fell into the snare which was laid for them, and suffered for it.

Balaam, abandoned by the ALMIGHTY, and full of rancor against Israel, through whom he had lost the favor of Balak, on his journey homewards stirred up the Midianites to engage in a war against them, and fell in the contest.

From the story of Balaam much may be learned, but in general it teaches us to mortify our passions, and to consult the word and commandment of the ALMIGHTY in all our undertakings. It is dangerous to tamper with the "wages of unrighteousness," and to indulge a desire for that which we know cannot be obtained, but at the expense of "a good conscience." If the evil inclination is once cherished, it will soon gain ground and destroy every principle of duty; it will overspread the mind, and render it insensible to all "that is just, and lovely, and of good report."

This history further reminds us that something more is necessary than the mere profession of religion. Balaam could presume to call the LORD "his GOD;" and could utter many very pious, and indeed sublime sentiments, but his heart was destitute of grace. Let it be our constant care, therefore, to watch over our hearts, and to examine ourselves whether we possess the *substance* as well as the mere *profession* of faith. It will not suffice to say that we have "prophesied in the name of the LORD; and in his name have done many wonderful works." Matt. vii. 22, 23. Thousands will be able to say the same at the last day, to whom these awful words will be addressed: "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Keeping this solemn consideration in our minds, let us take warning by those who have "made shipwreck of their faith," and by avoiding their errors, study to maintain "a conscience void of offence, both towards GOD and towards man." Acts xxiv. 16.

In conclusion, dear reader, which will you choose—this world or the next? The mind of man cannot be governed by opposite principles. A worldly temper, that is, a disposition to prefer worldly satisfactions and advantages to our immortal interests, has been justly called the essential soul, the living principle of evil. A heavenly disposition, which is implanted by the Divine Spirit, is the sole spring of genuine piety. These two principles can never harmonize. It is a vain task to aim at impossibilities. If you will be a friend of the world, you must be an enemy to GOD. To think that a worldly spirit can produce the effects of true religion, is as absurd as to think of making fire freeze, or ice burn. Where your treasure is, said CHRIST, there will your heart be also. If you can move a body at the same moment towards the east and west, you may reconcile sordid gain and sincere godliness, or at once cleave to the dust, and set your affections on things above. Is it not truly astonishing, that any should repeatedly make the foolish and fruitless attempt? But that conduct which would be thought to betray insanity in other things, often gains credit in religious matters. We should consider that man a lunatic or an idiot, who labored to make day-light and thick darkness dwell together, or perpetually wearied himself in trying to make a balance stand even, while feathers were put in one scale, and large masses of lead thrown into the other. It is the positive declaration of infallible truth, that no man can serve two masters, for either he will love the one and hate the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve GOD and Mammon. These masters have not one will and one end. Their authority widely differs; their commands continually clash.

What is the religion of worldly men? It matters little in what party or denomination they choose to be classed. "They sacrifice to their net, and burn incense to their drag; because by them their portion is made fat, and their meat plenteous." Hab. i

16. Whatever brings them gain, wins their homage. If it be trade, the counting house is their closet, and the leger their Bible. If it be usury, the bank is their temple, and their feelings are regulated by the rise and fall of stocks. If it be politics, the newspaper is their guide and companion, the statesman their guardian genius, and the paradise for which they long is the court, rich in places, pensions, titles, and honors. While they are either trafficking in the mart of business, or bowing bare-headed at the great man's door, they have but one end in view. Their anxieties, petitions, adorations, and vows, though varied by circumstances, have the same low origin and secular stamp. In a word, they have the creed of Balaam, and the devotion of Demas.

It appears then clearly impossible to serve God and Mammon And do you waver in uncertainty and doubt which to prefer? How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord is God, if his authority is supreme, if his favor is better than life, then serve him; but if the Bible be false, if a future state be only the dream of enthusiasm, if your riches and delights can fully satisfy, then serve Mammon. It is surely necessary to settle speedily a point which is the very hinge on which your wo or welfare turns. Your best interests are at stake. It is high time to determine a question which involves in it consequences of eternal moment. Let me, however, faithfully and earnestly urge upon you the Divine command: "Love not the world, neither the things of the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Will you now be a slave of Mammon, or a servant of God? Do you choose a portion below, or an inheritance above? O may you see and prefer, like Mary, the better part! May you resolve to cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart.

JOSHUA.

BORN IN THE YEAR OF THE WORLD, 2468; DIED, 2578.

IF the wisdom of GOD is strikingly displayed in the general order and preservation of his church, it is equally so in raising up proper persons for her service. When men of eminent talents and piety are removed from the sphere of usefulness to the kingdom of light, we are apt to think that the loss is irreparable, and that a breach has been made which time will never close. This only shows our ignorance and want of faith; for as the ALMIGHTY will never be without "a seed to serve him," so neither will he be without instruments in every age to carry on his great work in the world.

Moses died at a very critical juncture, when the children of Israel were arrived on the borders of the promised land, and had many formidable enemies to encounter; but JEHOVAH had already provided a man qualified to succeed his faithful servant in the person of Joshua, the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim.

This excellent person had been for many years the disciple and confidential friend of Moses, in which capacity he must have profited considerably both in wisdom and piety. He appears to have shown early a turn for military affairs: for while he was yet but a young man, Moses sent him at the head of an expedition against the Amalekites, in which he acquired great renown.

We find him after this accompanying his venerable lord to Mount Sinai, and abiding there forty days and forty nights, during which time the laws and ordinances for the government of Israel were delivered by JEHOVAH unto Moses.

His attachment to that great man was ardent, and on one occasion prevailed over prudence. When information was brought to Moses that two young men were prophesying to the people, the zeal of Joshua was roused for the honor of his master, which he imagined was injured by what he considered as an act of presumption, and he urged that an immediate stop might be put to their proceedings. But Moses had more enlarged views, and so far from discountenancing rising talents, he checked the eagerness of his servant in these forcible and generous words: "Enviest thou for my sake? Would to GOD that all the LORD's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his Spirit upon them?" Numb. xi. 29.

The next incident in the life of this eminent person shows a mind zealous for truth amidst the most formidable opposition, and bold in maintaining it even in the face of death itself.

On reaching the borders of Canaan, Moses selected twelve men from the different tribes to explore the country, and to bring a just account of its productions and inhabitants. These persons, it is supposed, divided themselves into six companies, that they might pass undiscovered through the country, and likewise obtain the more exact and extensive information. Ten of these spies, at their return to the camp, made so unfavorable a report of the land, and so greatly exaggerated the number and strength of the inhabitants, that the Israelites were thrown into despair, and began to form the

resolution of abandoning Moses, and marching back to Egypt. The mutiny was most alarming, when Joshua and Caleb, the other spies, boldly declared that the report of their associates was false, and the result of cowardice. "The land which we passed through to search it," say they, "is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land: for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not." Numb. xiv. 7—9.

This noble address, instead of calming the agitated minds of the people, and bringing them to their duty, only added fuel to their rage; and they were about to stone Caleb and Joshua, when the presence of the LORD interposed in behalf of his servants. For this heroic conduct these good men were privileged to enter into the land of promise, from whence all the rest of that generation were excluded. An honorable distinction was, moreover, put upon the son of Nun, in altering his name from Oshea to JEHOSHUA, which signifies "the Lord the Saviour," and is the same as JESUS in Greek. It was doubtless given to him in a mystical allusion to that spiritual Saviour of whom, in a variety of respects, he was an eminent type.

When Moses was commanded to "get up into Mount Nebo, and to die there," he was exceedingly anxious to leave the people under the direction of a wise, vigilant, and pious person. The LORD attended to the request of his aged servant, and directed him to present Joshua to Eleazer, the high priest, that he might be consecrated to the important office of conducting Israel into Canaan. Moses readily passed over his own family, and resigned his authority to one, of whose zeal and abilities he had abundant experience. Joshua was accordingly consecrated by the high priest, in the presence of all the people; and Moses gave him this solemn, impressive, and encouraging charge: "Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee; he will not fail, neither forsake thee; fear not, neither be dismayed." Deut. xxxi. 7, 8.

HIGH PRIEST'S COSTUME.

On the death of Moses, Joshua entered upon this important station; but though circumstances were then most critical, as he had a nation under him unused to war, and formidable enemies to encounter, yet his mind was firm, and he lost no time in preparing to pass over Jordan. He was, indeed, greatly strengthened by a promise of success given to him, directly from JEHOVAH himself: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life; as I was with Moses, so will I be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." Josh. i. 5.

He received, at the same time, a charge to make the holy law his constant study, and "to meditate therein day and night." Nothing will enable a man to discharge the duties of his station, particularly if it is a public and a difficult one, so well as an habitual acquaintance with the word of GOD.

We are here taught exactly the line that should be pursued in every circumstance and condition, and we are encouraged to practise what is right by the most striking and powerful examples. They who are called to the honorable but hazardous service of opposing the enemies of their country, have the greatest need of that heavenly panoply which is furnished by the gospel. It will preserve them amidst those powerful and numerous temptations to which they are peculiarly exposed; it will give energy to their minds, and render them collected and fearless in the hour of danger and of death.

In Joshua we contemplate with admiration the religious warrior, always consulting the will of GOD, and publicly avowing his determination "to serve him with his whole house." The influence of such an example must necessarily be very extensive; and the men under his command would be animated as much by his piety as by his courage.

As soon as he received the divine command to enter Canaan, he gave the necessary orders to the people to prepare themselves to pass over Jordan. It was now at that

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season of the year when the river overflowed its banks, and there were no means of crossing it. But JEHOVAH, to convince the people that nothing should be able to stand before them, caused the waters to divide, and they all passed over dry shod into the promised land, as their fathers had done in crossing the Red Sea at their deliverance from Egypt. The fame of this astonishing miracle was soon spread abroad among the different nations which inhabited the country, and "their heart was melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel." Josh. v. 1. This sudden panic, however, did not prevent them from taking measures for their security against these extraordinary invaders; and Joshua also prepared himself for a severe contest. Though the ALMIGHTY has ordained that his people shall enter and possess themselves of Canaan, he will not allow them to gain it without great exertions. Nor must the Christian expect to obtain his eternal inheritance, and his "crown of glory," till he has fought and conquered his spiritual foes. He must "overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil," before he can have an admission into the New Jerusalem, and "partake of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of GOD." Rev. ii. 7.

Before Joshua commenced his operations against the Canaanites, he took care to renew the rite of circumcision, which had been for a long time omitted. The passover was also celebrated with great solemnity, that the children of Israel might have their minds duly impressed with a regard for those ordinances which they had received from JEHOVAH, to keep them distinct from all other nations.

The first place that presented itself against them was Jericho, a city of great strength, and closely guarded, lest an attempt should be made to take it by surprise. While Joshua was engaged in viewing its fortifications, and perhaps with some degree of concern and anxiety, an extraordinary person appeared before him with a drawn sword in his hand. The Israelitish general readily advanced, and demanded "whether he was for them or for their enemies?" to which he received this answer, "Nay, but as the captain of the LORD'S host am I now come." Josh. v. 13—15. Joshua was instantly convinced that this was no other than the angel of the covenant, who had delivered Israel from Egypt, and was now come to put them in possession of the land promised to their fathers. He therefore fell upon his face and worshipped him. For this he received no check, which he would have done, had the visitant been merely a created intelligence; for when St. John committed a similar act to one of the celestial messengers, he was charged not to adore the creature, but the Creator. Rev. xix. 10. He to whom Joshua paid religious honor, not only received the homage, but commanded him, as he did Moses in Horeb, to "take off his shoes, for that the place whereon he stood was holy."

Now religious adoration paid to any creature was strictly prohibited in that law which Joshua was commanded to study, consequently the Being before whom he fell prostrate at this time could be no other than JEHOVAH. We find by St. Paul, that he who led Israel in the wilderness, and was "tempted by them," was the same who, "in the fulness of time," came clothed in human nature for the redemption of his church; the inference, therefore, is obvious, that Joshua now conversed with that glorious personage, of whom he had the distinguished honor to be a type.

Jericho shortly after this was entirely destroyed, and Joshua pronounced a curse, in the spirit of prophecy, upon the man who should undertake to rebuild it. This prediction was exactly fulfilled in the person of Hiel the Bethelite, in the reign of Ahab, above five hundred years after the death of Joshua. 1 Kings xvi. 34.

It does not fall within the compass of my design to enter into a detail of the wars in which Joshua was engaged; as that subject belongs rather to the general history of the Israelites. But it cannot be passed over that his conduct as a general was most skilful, brave, and disinterested. He punctually fulfilled all the commandments which he received from GOD, and he always behaved with the strictest regard to the principles of justice. Of this we have two remarkable instances.

At the siege of Jericho the people were strictly commanded not to meddle with "the accursed thing," or to take any part of the spoils which were condemned to be destroyed, lest they should thereby contract a love for the Canaanitish customs. Contrary to this prohibition, Achan, a man of rank, secreted a quantity of the goods taken in the city, for which the anger of the LORD rose against Israel, and they were repulsed in their attack upon the city of Ai. Joshua, on discovering the cause of this disaster, dealt with Achan in such gentle terms, as to gain from him an ingenuous confession of his guilt. For this

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the offender and his family were cut off from Israel, as a terrible example, which doubtless at that crisis was considered as indispensably necessary. The other instance of Joshua's strict regard for justice was in the case of the Gibeonites. This people, being greatly alarmed at the progress of Israel, and sensible that there was no chance of escaping that destruction which was about to fall upon the nations in Canaan, sent a deputation to Joshua, pretending they came from a distant country, and courting his alliance. After some inquiry the heads of Israel were satisfied, and the proposed treaty was acceded to and confirmed. But when it was discovered that these people were near neighbors, the Israelites complained of the conduct of their princes, and expressed a desire to have the treaty annulled. Joshua, however, had too sacred a regard for public faith to violate the agreement he had entered into, even though the conduct of the Gibeonites was fraudulent. When the rest of the Canaanites heard of this alliance, they were exceedingly provoked against Gibeon as an apostate nation, and declared war against it. Joshua, on receiving information of this confederacy, marched to the assistance of his allies, and defeated their enemies with prodigious slaughter. On this occasion a miracle happened, which has given rise to many speculations, and been opposed by infidels with much parade of scientific skill. As the people were engaged in the pursuit of the Amorites, Joshua said, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon, in the valley of Ajalon.* And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the

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people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about

* THE VALLEY OF AJALON.—The path that leads to the sepulchres of the judges is more pleasing than many of the walks around Jerusalem. There is more appearance of verdure, and trees, and cultivation; but the tombs themselves stand in a very wild situation. No shadow, not even of a rock, is spread over these long-enduring relics, in which tradition has placed the ashes of the rulers of Israel. They consist of several divisions, each containing two or three apartments, cut out of the solid rock, and entablatures are carved with some skill over the entrance. No riches

a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel." Josh. x. 12, 13, 14.

There are very few modern interpreters who have not expressed their belief that the expressions employed by Joshua are to be understood only as figurative. But they differ much in the extent to which they press this figure, and in the meaning which they assign to it. It will amount to the same thing if, instead of being figurative, the words were employed merely in accommodation to the astronomical notions which at that time and long after prevailed—whether this arose from ignorance of the true astronomy on the part of Joshua, or from an intention to use only such expressions as should be intelligible to the people.

It is well known that this passage long formed a stumbling-block to the general reception of the Copernican system; because it ascribes the diurnal motion to the sun which that system gives to the earth itself. But now, even those who contend in general for the literal interpretation of all Scripture, for the most part allow that the suspension of the earth's motion is the *utmost* we are required to understand. And the sun being at rest, as it respects the diurnal motion, it is indeed impossible that by the discontinuance of a motion, in order to produce the phenomenon of protracted day, any-

carved relics, or fragments of sarcophagi, remain here, as in the tombs of the kings; and their only use is to shelter the wandering passenger, or the benighted traveller, who finds no other resting-place in the wild around. There are scenes of far higher interest at no great distance from this place: advancing along a bare but richly picturesque country, we saw a few people busy in the small valleys, in which there were here and there well-cultivated fields and scattered plantations of fruit-trees. The sides and summits of nearly all the hills that rose thickly around us were untouched by the hand of man; but they seemed to have been touched by a more withering hand, either of the tempest, or of an offended heaven. There were cottages and hamlets there; for the people of Palestine, like those of all hilly countries, seem to prefer their bold eminences to the more sheltered vales for a residence. In the way we met a numerous group of female peasants, old and young; they seemed to be going to their daily labor; and their olive complexions, mean dresses, and pallid features, over which their dark hair loosely hung, realized no dream of oriental beauty.

The heat became rather oppressive; and we looked in vain on every side for a clear spring, or rivulet, as a momentary relief. After turning to the left, and proceeding many miles, we came at last to the summit of a lofty eminence that commanded a wide and varied view on every side. It is one advantage of this confined and romantic territory, that almost every summit presents many an illustrious scene at a single glance. But the scene on which this hill looked down, though not very nigh, was particularly memorable: in front extended a spacious and fruitful valley, of great length, and, as far as the distance might allow of distinguishing, one of the most picturesque and varied in the land, after those of Jordan and Esdraelon. Tradition has always preserved its identity as the valley of Ajalon, in which was fought the great battle between Israel and the five kings of the Amorites.

The valley is of sufficient breadth and compass to allow of a numerous host engaging in its bosom, and presents as fine a field of battle as two armies—the one fighting desperately for conquest, the other for life and all that was dear to them—could desire. The Amorites were probably surprised by Joshua, as they were encamped in this valley, and hemmed in by hills on each side, as it is said, "he came suddenly upon them;" and, after a bloody combat, they fled along the valley, whose enclosed space on each side afforded great advantage to the pursuers, as it appeared to be from twelve to fifteen miles in length. On the summit of a lofty hill that stands in the bosom of the valley, Gibeon is supposed to have stood, as there is a hamlet of the name Gebé still standing on the site; and this site agrees with the description given. The fields of battle of the ancient Israelites often derive an added interest in the stranger's eye, from the striking and beautiful scenes on which they were fought. The scenes of Bethulia, of the valley of Elah, the plain of Esdraelon, and the noble mountain on which Samaria stood, are all splendid subjects for a painter's hand, as well as for a prophet's description. And the peculiar and bold aspect of this memorable valley must have greatly aided the effect of the miracle, for which nature made it a fitting theatre. The high hill of Gibeon, towards the west, overlooked the whole region; and the royal city on its summit, just before besieged by the confederated kings, was the meed for which both armies fought—the one to save, the other to destroy. It may be inferred that the day was waning on the ruthless slaughter of the vanquished, who fled along the valley to the opposite extremity to which their conqueror entered; and, while the declining rays were thrown redly on the lofty hill and the royal city that crowned it, Joshua, to fix as it were a point on which the sinking sun might be said to rest, as well as to show more vividly to his allies a proof that Heaven fought with Israel, uttered that sublime command, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon;" the latter being a proof that the day was near to set.

It would seem, too, that the destroying storm from on high fell not on the flying Amorites, until, issuing forth from the valley of Ajalon, and the narrow and enclosed places between the hills, they descended on the wide plain beyond. Here, scattering themselves far and wide on every side, they could more easily avoid the pursuer's sword, from whose edge the greater part would have escaped, but that they fell by Divine arrest. This valley is better inhabited and cultivated than most other places in the territory, and seems to enjoy a more equal and healthful temperature, and no change has probably taken place in mountain, valley, or hill, since that day.

thing more than the supension of the motion which actually occasions the phenomena of day and night could be intended; and that is the motion of the earth, not of the sun—yet so *apparently* that of the sun, that forms of speech still current among ourselves justify and explain the true meaning of the words which Joshua employed. Indeed, we will hazard an opinion that a modern general, under the same circumstances, would not be intelligible to an army if, instead of commanding the sun to stand still, he ordered the motion of the earth to be suspended.

We believe that there was adequate cause, in the manifestation of the Divine power and greatness, for a very signal miracle; and therefore the objection, that it is unlikely that the motion of the earth should be suspended for so inadequate a cause as that of enabling Joshua to complete his victory over the already defeated Canaanites, is of no solid weight. But there are those who very sincerely believe that "the whole machinery of the universe is in the hand of GOD, and he can stop the motion of the whole or any part of it with less trouble than any of us can stop a watch,"* who yet, very properly, wish to know what it is that they are required to believe. *If it is clearly affirmed* or implied that the earth stood still, they see nothing to hinder them from believing that it was so, even though all the particulars may not be perfectly comprehensible to them. Although, therefore, it may be evident that in one or two instances the authors of the alternatives we are about to submit, were actuated by a desire to pare down the miracle to their own capacities of belief, it would be exceedingly unfair to say that all those who have arrived at a conclusion short of that which teaches that the motion of the earth was suspended, were influenced by any other motive than a desire to ascertain the truth.

There are certain general principles on which nearly all these explanations proceed. In the first place we are reminded that in all the works of GOD, and even in his miraculous dispensations, there is no inordinate or lavish waste of power; or, in other words, that the second cause employed is adequate, and not more than adequate, to the production of the required effect—that He does not speak in thunder when the small still voice would be equally operative. Hence it is argued that if there be any act of Divine power, whereby the required prolongation of the day might be produced, we are at liberty to seek for it, instead of at once concluding that the words imply so serious a derangement of our system as, it appears, even the stoppage of the earth and moon must have occasioned.

Then, again, we are reminded that it is said by a writer, certainly posterior in point of time to this transaction, that "no prophet since was like unto Moses, with respect to the signs and wonders which he wrought." Deut. xxiv. 10, 11. But the miracle now in question, if understood literally, or as indicating a discontinuance of the earth's motion, very far exceeded all the miracles wrought by the hand of Moses. They were local, and for the most part limited to the particular occasions which rendered them necessary; but this stupendous miracle must have extended to the whole world, and must have been felt even at the antipodes as the greatest prodigy that could possibly happen. It is also singular that if the miracle had been by the Hebrews themselves understood in this extent, there is no allusion to it in any subsequent passage of Scripture. There is no early miracle which is not mentioned repeatedly—to magnify the greatness, the mercy, or the judgment of GOD—by the psalmists and the prophets; but to this, the greatest of them all, and the one by which, at least, the power of GOD would be the most magnified, no reference is made. Even the apostle, when, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, enumerating the examples of faith which the old saints afforded, takes particular notice of the destruction of Jericho, and the stay of Rahab, both of which belong to the time, and were connected with the history of Joshua, and are recorded in the same book, passes by this astonishing event, although it is recorded in the same book in which he found these far less important instances of what he wished to illustrate. The inference from this is, that although there certainly was a miracle in the matter, it was understood by the later sacred writers to be something far less stupendous than later and more literal interpreters have been led to imagine.

Considering all these circumstances, it is deemed probable that the words of Joshua and the context are to be regarded as an example of those bold metaphors and poetical forms of expression with which the Scriptures abound. Further, we are reminded, in confirmation of this opinion, that the historian refers to the book of Jasher, in which this transaction had been previously recorded. Now this book (which is also referred

* Bishop Watson

to in 2 Sam. i. 18) appears to have been a collection of contemporary songs or poems, in celebration of remarkable events; or, perhaps, a poetical chronicle, of which there are examples in most early histories. In such a work we might expect to find examples of those bold figures for which the Hebrew and all other Oriental poetry is celebrated; and in reading which, it would be productive of very serious mistakes if we fettered our judgment to that literal sense to which, in other cases, we are right to adhere. Would we understand literally such expressions as, "The deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high," Hab. iii. 10; "Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together," Ps. xcviii. 8; "The valleys shout for joy, they also sing," Ps. lxiii. 13; "I will make mine arrows drunk with blood," Deut. xxxiii. 42; "The mountains melted," Judg. v. 5; "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera," verse 20; "The mountains shall be melted with their blood, and all the host of heaven shall be dissolved?" Isa. xxxiv. 3, 4. After being accustomed to such sublimity of metaphor, we should not refuse to entertain the idea, that some bard made Joshua speak in the same lofty strain; and that the few words here quoted from the book of Jasher, consisting of two hemistichs, formed only part of an ode celebrating the defeat of the five kings. The historian, in repeating to an audience contemporary w th the event, the well-known words of a contemporary poet, is not liable to be misunderstood, however figurative may be the terms employed. To such an audience it would have seemed an impertinence to explain the sense in which the familiarly-known figure was to be understood.

Under such impressions various writers have thought themselves at liberty to inquire what these expressions, supposed by them to be figurative, might really denote.

Josephus only says that the day was lengthened, that the night might not come on too soon.* Maimonides interprets the passage to mean that Joshua's wish only was that the sun might not go down till his victory was completed; and that this was heard, by his being enabled to do as much execution in one day as would otherwise have required two days.† Another Jewish writer, Spinosa, followed by more than one recent commentator, reduces the miracle to the application of a natural second cause, to the prolongation of the day, for the use, at the time wanted, and by the desire of Joshua. And this is supposed to have been effected by the refraction of the sun's rays by the atmosphere, which was then more than ordinarily charged with hail.‡

Grotius is so much influenced by the omission of any allusion to this stupendous event, as literally understood, by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, when it was so much to his purpose to have adduced it, that he is disposed to agree with Maimonides. Peirerius supposes the phenomenon which occasioned a prolonged daylight was local only—confined to Palestine—or perhaps even to the territories about Gibeon; which he imagines were enlightened by a kind of twilight, or something like our aurora borealis, which continued long enough to answer the purpose for which it was required.§ Le Clerc, who argues the question generally, fortifies by additional arguments the theories of the two preceding writers, without proposing any new explanation of his own.

It is evident from what has been said, that, as usually understood and translated, the text, if not figurative, must indicate the discontinued motion of the earth, and, with it, of the moon. Bishop Gleig, whose additions and elucidations have given a fresh value to a rather indifferent book,‖ after contending with great earnestness and ability for the fitness of our belief in this, and stating the reasons for such belief, *if it be required;* goes on to intimate his impression, or rather to state the alternative, that the text is open to the other interpretation. He says:—

"It does not, however, appear that an actual cessation of the motion of the earth was necessary to produce all that happened according to the narrative of the sacred historian. The radical import of the word דמם which some take to be *silence*, and others, as our translators, *stillness*, is *equable*, *level*, *uniform*, *even*, *parallel;* and the words בחצי השמים which, in our version, are rendered 'in the midst of Heaven,' signifying in that division of the heavens which is made by the visible horizon; from all which it follows, that the sun must have been in the horizon, just ready to set, when Joshua issued the command which appeared to arrest him in his course. The

* "Antiq." v. 1. 17. † "More Nevochim," ii. 39. ‡ "Tract. Theologico-politic." c. 2.
§ Præadamit. iv. 6.
‖ Stackhouse's "History of the Bible." Bishop Gleig's edition is in three quarto volumes London 1817

word שמש, which we render sun, signifies rather the *solar light* than the *orb* of the sun; and therefore the whole passage might be thus rendered:—'Solar light, remain thou upon Gibeon; and be thou, moon, stayed, or supported, over the valley of Ajalon: and the solar light remained, and the moon was stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the solar light lingered in the division of the heavens, or in the horizon, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.'

"But all this may have been produced, not indeed without a miracle, and a great miracle, but certainly without stopping the rotatory motion of the earth. We know that the sun, by one of the present laws of nature, appears to be in the horizon, after he has actually sunk a degree or two below it. What is the cause of this phenomenon? The common reply is, the *refractive power* of the atmosphere; but this, like the words *attraction* and *repulsion* in astronomy, is nothing more than metaphorical language; for, in the proper sense of the word, the atmosphere can have no *power*. The fact is simply this, that by the *will of God*, which first brought the universe into being, and now supports it in its present form, a ray of light, passing obliquely out of a rare medium into a denser, is bent at the point of incidence towards the perpendicular, and bent more or less according to the density of the medium into which it passes. If the rays of the setting sun be so bent at present as to make him appear visible in the horizon, when we know him to be a certain number of degrees below it, might not He, who by a mere act of volition, produces regularly this effect, by a different act of volition, so order matters, that a ray of light, passing from the sun to this earth, should be so bent at the angle of incidence, and during its progress through the atmosphere, which is of unequal density, as to make the sun visible at once over half the globe, or even over the whole? No man of reflection will say that He could not; and if so, the solar light might have been made to linger on the temples of Gibeon, and the moon to appear in the valley of Ajalon, without stopping the diurnal rotation of the earth, and producing that violent reaction which is commonly urged as an insuperable objection to the Scriptural account of this miracle. The objection in itself is, indeed, of no force; for He who could make the rotation of the earth to cease for a few hours could, at the same time, prevent the *natural* consequences of such a sudden cessation of motion so rapid: and to Almighty power it was as easy to do all this as to bend a ray of light round half the surface of our globe, which would have equally served the only purpose for which the miracle appears to have been wrought. The bending of the ray would have been just as great a miracle as suspending the motion of the earth; for by either means the duration of the light of day would have been so protracted, as to render that day without a parallel in the annals of the world; and I have stated the alternative only to show the unlearned reader that there is nothing in this stupendous miracle more difficult to be conceived than there is in every other work of Almighty power—even in the ordinary works carried on according to what is called the laws of nature."

When the whole country was conquered, Joshua made an exact and satisfactory division of it among the different tribes, reserving nothing for his own family. The people, however, bestowed upon him Timnath-serah, and there he fixed his residence.

A considerable outcry has been made by infidels upon the destruction of the Canaanites, and Joshua has been represented by them as nothing better than a ferocious freebooter, without either justice or humanity. That the judgments of God were very heavy upon those people, there can be no question, but let it be remembered also that their iniquities were very heavy. From the time of Abraham, the cup of their wickedness had been filling to such a degree, that at last the divine vengeance could be restrained no longer, and they were extirpated from the earth as an abomination in the sight of God. In their calamity we see only what has happened to other nations, and what reallydid happen in process of time to the Jews themselves. The case of the Canaanites was not more fearful than that of the Jews when their capital fell into the hands of the Romans; and yet on the cruelty of Titus the accusers of Joshua are silent.

The Israelitish general acted in direct obedience of a positive command given to him by the Almighty governor of the universe; but the Romans could plead no such precept, though there can be no doubt of their being the instruments of divine justice, to punish a guilty land.

The remainder of Joshua's life was spent in the bosom of domestic tranquillity. He descended into the evening of his days, with the calm satisfaction of having discharged his public duties in such a manner as to procure the gratitude of a whole nation, and

above all, the approbation of his GOD. His friends and domestics were numerous, affectionate, and religious. He saw the public tranquillity secured, the enemies of Israel cut off on all sides, and the divine promises most gloriously accomplished.

Perceiving his dissolution drawing near, he convened the people, and addressed them with all that warmth of affection, and generous concern for their prosperity, which a tender father may be supposed to feel for his offspring in his expiring moments.

He reminds them of what GOD had done for their ancestors and for them, of the wonderful acts which the divine arm had wrought on their behalf, the signal victories which they had thereby obtained over their foes, and the gracious fulfilment of the divine promise in establishing them in Canaan. He then with great earnestness presses upon them their gratitude to GOD, and the obligation they lay under to preserve the true faith and worship inviolate, by keeping at the remotest distance from the idolatrous practices of their neighbors. At the same time adding his own resolution, that, let their determination be what it would, "he and his household would serve the LORD." Josh. xxiv. 15.

He promises in an authoritative manner, as the prophet of the Most High, eminent privileges and blessings to those who should continue obedient to the statutes and ordinances they had received from Moses; and fearful judgments upon the violators of them. The people were greatly affected with this valedictory address of their venerable leader, and exclaimed with eagerness, "The LORD our GOD will we serve, and his voice will we obey." The covenant was then renewed with great solemnity, and Joshua, having discharged this last public act, retired to his house, where he soon aftermet death with the serene composure of a religious hero, at the advanced age of one hundred and ten years.

"The memory of Joshua and of his victories was long preserved, and his reputation spread among the heathen nations. He is generally considered as the original of the Phœnician Hercules; and the scene of his victories, as well as the conquests themselves, is still discernible in the disfigured accounts which are given concerning that fictitious hero. It has been collected from monuments still extant, that the Carthaginians were a colony of the Tyrians who fled from the exterminating sword of Joshua, as also that the inhabitants of Leptis, in Africa, were primarily derived from Zidonians, who had been compelled to forsake their country in consequence of calamities brought upon it by the conquests of this great commander."*

Joshua had the distinguished honor of being the first who bore the name which was to be assumed by the REDEEMER of the world, and he resembled also that glorious person in his actions. As Joshua brought the good report, and evangelized concerning the promised land, (when false or faint inquirers defamed it, and discouraged the people from entering,) as he was educated under Moses, and served him faithfully; as he succeeded in the administration and government of GOD's people, perfecting what Moses had begun of deliverance and settlement to them; as he brought the Israelites (not that old disbelieving, mutinous, and repining generation, but a new progeny of better disposed people) finally out of the wilderness into Canaan, by GOD's miraculous assistance, subduing their enemies, and establishing them in a quiet possession of the promised land, allotting unto each tribe its inheritance; and as he did recircumcise the children of Israel: so did our heavenly JESUS first make a true and faithful discovery concerning the mystical land of promise, (that better country flowing with spiritual milk and honey, abounding with all spiritual comforts and pleasures, for the food, sustenance, and refreshment of our souls.) He was born under the law, and submitted to its injunctions, fulfilling all righteousness. He survived it, that part of it which was purely Mosaical and arbitrary, and did complete it. He doth conduct GOD's regenerate people (such as believe and willingly follow him) out of the desert state of error, guilt, and sin, into the superior state of happy rest and joy, with miraculous power and efficacy; vanquishing all the spiritual *Amorites* (the *devil*, *world*, and *flesh*) which infest, obstruct, and oppose them; settling them in a perpetual, undisturbed, and immoveable enjoyment of that blissful region: having also by a spiritual circumcision prepared and consecrated them to GOD. Our SAVIOUR, therefore, not only when he at last, in fulness of time, did come into the world, but anciently in type and shadow, may be supposed to have had this name *Jesus* conferred upon him in the person of Joshua, his most illustrious representative.

* Gray's Key to the Old Testament, p. 148.

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RUTH.*

LIVED ABOUT THE YEAR OF THE WORLD 2759.

O one can question the importan e of the female character in society. We a:e among those who believe that it is far greater than men, in general, seem willing to admit. The infant mind receives its first bias, its information, and its moulding from maternal care and instruction. What then could be expected of a generation springing from libertine females? A woman void of religious principles will have but little disposition to inculcate those principles into the minds of her children; and should she permit them, for the sake of form, to be taught the rudiments of Christianity, her own practice would soon obliterate the faint outline which has been drawn, and from her example they will learn, as they grow older, to despise the lessons of piety as trifles only calculated for the school or the nursery.

Such a character is no less shocking than it is, as we would charitably hope, unfrequent: but that it may never become a common one, it is indispensably requisite that the utmost care be taken of the education of females. In an age of levity, skepticism, and pride, when to profess deism, if not indeed a darker species of infidelity, is reckoned a proof of superior sagacity and mental energy, too great an attention cannot be paid to the cultivation of the female mind. Those false pictures of life which are exhibited in romantic tales, and frivolous novels, are only apologies for the worst of vices, and have a direct tendency to eradicate the principles of religion from the mind, by weakening the influence of its precepts. In these productions, and also in the memoirs of certain female writers, crimes which once were

* Female Characters of Scripture.—The manner in which woman is noticed in the practical parts of Scripture accords with the place she is allowed to hold in the Christian economy. The precepts which are to regulate female conduct are equally precise with those which apply to the other sex, and the examples equally instructive. We cannot, indeed, but be peculiarly struck with the natural and appropriate, as well as beautiful delineation of female character in Scripture. No point is overcharged—no virtue exaggerated. The portrait is the more affecting because it is so like. It is the gentle, tender, and feeling woman whom we meet with in real life; and though the sublime situations in which she is placed, as well as the language and imagery of Scripture, invest the heroine of the Bible with a peculiar charm, she is not so highly raised above ordinary circumstances as not to provoke our sympathy and invite our imitation. On this account the illustrations of the sacred volume are of the highest value. The female Christian who is familiar with them needs few other models. Besides the chasteness and simplicity which characterize these examples, there is a detail about them which is not only graphically true, but practically instructive. It is not merely by their prophetic visions or inspired songs that we are made acquainted with the female worthies of the ancient church; we converse with them in their homes—we see them in the discharge of family and social functions; and we find in general, that those who were the most highly honored by Divine favor were the most blameless and amiable, according to our ideas of female excellence. The Bible might therefore be recommended were it only for its moral illustrations; and those who think lightly of its mysteries are often not without appreciation of its value in this point of view. But mutilation, while it robs the Christian system of its beauty, spoils its effect. There is no part independent of another; take it in its perfect gradation, the harmony is complete; but the abstraction of a single principle cannot be without prejudice to the whole.

regarded with horror as the bane of civil society, are blandished over, and even made the subject of boast. The most ancient and sacred of all contracts is set at naught, and treated as a badge of superstition and slavery. The representation of the death-beds of these heroines is not the affecting and instructive picture of penitence, but the melancholy exhibition of insensibility. For this delineation, indeed, we are indebted only to the story-teller; but if the subject really had an existence, it is most probable that the truth has not been told. Some, indeed, in writing the lives of real characters, seem to take a pride in telling us that they despised religion; but it should also be observed, that these same biographers have had the honesty to tell us that they set at naught the precepts of moral obligation.

I would not, however, wish to depreciate the genius or the judgment of women. There are instances innumerable of their profound sagacity, brilliant imagination, amazing fortitude, quickness of perception, and strength of intellect. But it will always be allowed by the judicious part of mankind, that the most valuable graces of the female character are meekness, humility, and modesty; none of which can reasonably be expected where religion is not the ruling principle.*

The Scripture history furnishes us with several instances of female excellence, some of which have been already noticed, and others lie before us. Our attention at present is called to the story of an amiable woman who may justly be said "to have forsaken all for CHRIST," in an age when the strongest eye of faith could barely discern him as a glimmering star at a great distance. But she had the honor for her faithfulness to become the mother of princes, and to have her name immortalized in the genealogy of the King of righteousness.

The conversion of RUTH, the Moabitess, forms an entire book in the sacred canon, and that of moment, as completing the book of Judges, and making a part of the genealogical history of the MESSIAH. The author of it is generally allowed to be Samuel: but as to the period when the events recorded in it happened there are different opinions. Some, with great probability, place the famine mentioned in the first chapter in the time of Gideon, but others carry it much farther back. One reason why commentators have perplexed themselves so much upon this point, is, that St. Matthew mentions Boaz as being the son of Rachab, whom they will have to be the woman of Jericho, who hid the Hebrew spies. But for this there does not seem to be any solid ground, since the apostle does not spell the name in the same manner as the Septuagint, St. Paul, and St. James do; therefore I see no reason why *Rachab* and *Rahab* may not be two different persons. Besides, Boaz was the great grandfather of David, who was born in 2919; of course, by placing the era of this book so far back, the immediate progenitors of that monarch must have lived to a far greater age than was usual at that period. It is merely recorded by the sacred writer, that the famine happened when the Judges ruled; and if it was that which occurred in the time of Gideon, the era is fixed at about the year of the world 2759.

The narrative itself is very affecting, and presents a beautiful picture of the simple manners of antiquity.

Elimelech was a person of considerable distinction in Bethelem-Judah; in a time of great scarcity, he was obliged to dispose of his patrimonial estate, and to go with his family into the land of Moab. This was not merely a country of strangers, but of enemies, for the Moabites had a rooted animosity against Israel; but the over-ruling providence of GOD provides an asylum for his servants even amongst their most inveterate foes.

Here the good man ended his days, and left two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, to be the protectors of their aged mother Naomi. No sooner were these youths arrived at man's estate than they took wives from among the daughters of Moab. Whether their conduct was offensive to the ALMIGHTY is not hinted at in the Scripture; but as they were swept off childless, and in the prime of life, some divines have conjectured that their premature deaths proceeded from the divine displeasure.

Naomi, on being deprived of her earthly comforts, turned her sorrowful eyes towards the land of her nativity. She is now set adrift to the mercy of the world, without a husband, without children, and reduced to want. In this condition she hears that the

* I shall stand in no need of excuse for recommending to the perusal of my fair readers that inraluable book written by the late Miss Hannah More, entitled "STRICTURES ON FEMALE EDUCATION" a work which will live, and be read with pleasure and profit, when the pert productions of modern novelists and philosophists are sunk into eternal darkness.

LORD has visited his people with bread; and she resolves to return to her country and her kindred. The journey was long and difficult, not less than one hundred and twenty miles, and part of the way was mountainous. It was an arduous task, therefore, for an aged female to undertake, without a guide, and without the means of procuring the necessaries of life. But Naomi is bent upon the journey; and the hope of seeing her native spot once more, gives her confidence, and makes her fearless of all dangers that may occur in the way.

While her husband and sons were living, we do not read of any plan of returning to Judah; but when her friends and property were gone, then Naomi felt her isolated condition, and turned her thoughts towards home.

Happy will it be for us also, if the loss of relatives, or any other visitation of Providence, has this effect of weaning our minds and affections from this world, and of fixing them upon the Jerusalem which is above.

Naomi no sooner forms her determination than she puts it into execution. There can be no time for deliberation in her condition. She had no property to dispose of, no friends to consult, nothing in fact to take with her on this long journey. But so amiable and endearing was her character, so truly did her disposition comport with her name of Naomi, or "my pleasant one," that her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, were ready to forsake their country and their friends to accompany her. When they had proceeded part of the way, the good woman earnestly entreated them to return, expressing her grateful acknowledgments for all the kindness which they had shown to her deceased children and to herself. After many importunities, Orpah was prevailed upon to go back to her relations: but the attachment of Ruth to Naomi was indelible, and, in the emphatic language of Scripture, "she clave unto her." Ruth i. 14.

Naomi, however, was unwilling to draw an amiable young creature from the fostering wing of her own mother, and from the comforts of her native country, to endure poverty and distress in a land of strangers. She, therefore, urged her earnestly to follow the example of Orpah, and mentioned one circumstance which appears plainly to have touched the true string of Ruth's attachment: "She is gone back unto her gods," says Naomi, "therefore return thou after thy sister-in-law." This, at once, fixes the resolution of Ruth, and with a noble earnestness she replies, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy GOD my GOD. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." Chap. i. 16, 17.

Religion was at the root of Ruth's attachment. She loved Naomi, because she loved the GOD in whom Naomi believed, and whom she worshipped. She was, therefore, determined to cast in her lot with the LORD's inheritance, and with cheerfulness did she renounce "father and mother, and house and lands," and all that she had or could expect in Moab, for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.

Before her, what appeared but penury, and want, and labor, among a people who probably would look upon her with contempt—behind her were kind and affectionate friends, ease, and comfort, and perhaps an honorable alliance;—but then the "gods of Moab" were dumb idols, or destructive devils, and the GOD of Israel was the fountain of life and happiness.

This consideration decided the choice of Ruth, and she resolved to "cleave unto Naomi," regardless of all the distress which might be the consequence of it.

In the conduct of Ruth we behold an example which we are expressly called upon to imitate by our Redeemer, if we would enter into his rest. When the world, with its honors and delights, its fair prospects and allurements, and when the solicitations of friends, and the calls even of nature itself, endeavor to keep us back from the path of holiness, the alternative is death or life. By retreating we are lost, by the pursuit we shall obtain honor and immortality. The firm and decided tone of Ruth silenced the tongue of Naomi; and, doubtless, kindled in her heart the most lively admiration and gratitude. The poor pilgrims proceeded on lovingly together, and the good providence of GOD brought them safely to Bethlehem-judah. An absence of ten years must necessarily have made some alteration in the person of Naomi: but her sorrows had been of no ordinary magnitude, and the iron hand of affliction had made such deep ravages in her countenance as to excite the sympathetic astonishment of her old acquaintance.

"Is this Naomi?" exclaimed the inhabitants of Bethlehem, as they crowded round

her. The question recalled to the memory of the good woman all her sufferings, and opened afresh all the wounds of her heart. When she quitted her native country, she possessed property, an affectionate husband, and promising children; but now she is poor and friendless, a widow and childless. The transition was most affecting, and to be insensible under such an accumulation of woes, so far from arguing religious fortitude, would have betrayed sullen indifference, and a callous stubbornness of heart.

The bruised reed will sigh as it bends submissively to the divine will; and its complainings will excite the tender compassion of GOD, while the intractable and unfeeling can be brought low only by the fierceness of his anger.

Naomi blends with her moaning the sentiments of piety, and acknowledges her afflictions as the visitation of the ALMIGHTY. "And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Marah: for the ALMIGHTY hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the ALMIGHTY hath afflicted me?" Ruth i. 20, 21.

The following reflection of a pious writer upon this passage is most excellent:

"She that had lost all things but her name, is willing to part with that also: *Call me not Naomi, but call me Marah.* Her humility cares little for a glorious name, in a dejected state. Many a one would have set faces upon their want, and in the bitterness of their condition, have affected the name of beauty. In all forms of good, there are more that care to seem than to be: Naomi hates this hypocrisy, and since GOD hath humbled her, desires not to be respected of men. Those which are truly brought down, make it not dainty that the world should think them so; but are ready to be the first proclaimers of their own vileness."

Though Naomi arrived in safety at her native city, and though she was recognised by numbers of her former acquaintance, yet we do not find that any acts of benevolence were shown her by them. They could express, indeed, a kind of sympathetic concern at her altered condition; but when she told them her tale of wo, we read not of any attempt made to pour balm into her wounded heart. None opened their doors to admit the weary and afflicted travellers; none, that we read of, administered to their wants. Her return excited curiosity and some degree of compassion, and that was all.

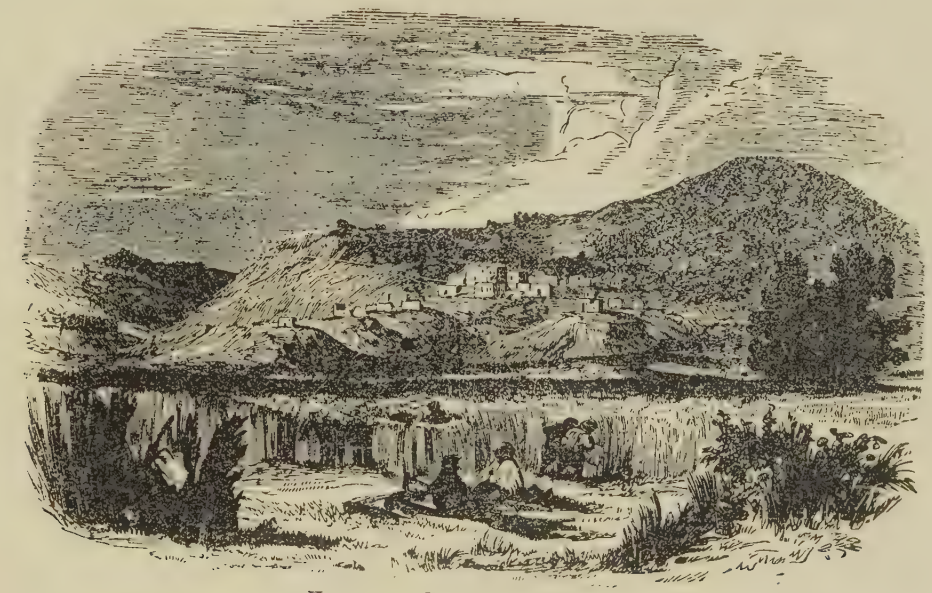
It was now the time of barley-harvest, the season of joy and festivity, in which we should expect that grateful man would imitate the beneficence of his Maker, and having himself freely received, be as ready and cheerful to give. But this was not the case. Naomi and her faithful daughter-in-law were suffered, after having satisfied the idle curiosity of the Bethlehemites, to retire to an obscure cottage without anything to support them. Providence, however, which has guided the friendless widows home for a wise and gracious purpose, is now about to bring them through the low and painful valley of adversity, to ease and honor.

The ALMIGHTY "crowns the year with his goodness, and his paths drop fatness; they drop upon the pastures of the wilderness; and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing." Psalm lxv. 12, 13.

When he thus pours out his bounties upon the world, and the face of creation wears a glowing and smiling aspect; what does he require of man but cheerfulness and gratitude?

We are to rejoice in his gifts of providence and of grace, and when the heart is thus opened to a due sense of the divine goodness, it will be drawn out into the exercise of love and charity to those who are in need. If we are thoroughly impressed with gratitude to GOD for his benefits showered down upon ourselves, we shall be ready to show it in acts of liberality to the children of poverty.

But he has expressly enjoined in his law that the "joy of harvest" shall be thus manifested by the wealty towards their indigent brethren. He has not left the duty of charity in the season of festivity to the common dictates of conscience, but has enforced it by a very explicit statute. "When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow; that the LORD thy GOD may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. When thou beatest thine olive-tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. And thou



HARVEST IN PALESTINE. CANA.

OLIVE (*Olea Europæa*).

shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing." Deut. xxiv. 19—22.

Every particular of this compassionate edict manifests the divine goodness.

The persons who are to receive its benefits, are not the idle and vagrant poor, but the friendless stranger, the desolate orphan, and the afflicted widow. The grant which thus provides for the destitute, extends not only to the absolute necessaries of life, but also to "wine which gladdeth man's heart, and to the oil which maketh him of a cheerful countenance." In dispensing these his gifts for the comfort and pleasure of man, the ALMIGHTY graciously ordains that the very poor shall be partakers of them. The man of affluence who has everything at command, and every luxury within his reach, may think it improper to indulge the needy with anything more than is barely necessary to their support. But the LORD, who has made "the whole creation to sing," by the smiles of his countenance and by the bounties of his hand, will have the poor to partake of the general joy, by sharing in the blessings which he has bestowed. As a powerful reason for the discharge of this duty, the people are reminded of the wretched and destitute condition in which their fathers groaned in Egypt. In like manner the man who by the goodness of GOD has been brought from a low estate, to the possession of wealth, ought to have his mind possessed with a recollection of his origin, as an incentive to gratitude, humility, and to charity. Has he been raised from a dunghill and set with princes, or, by the smile of Heaven upon his industry, is he placed in a state of independence, let him not forget that he once was poor, neither let him be so ungrateful to GOD as to shut his ears against the cries of the miserable.

Methinks I see poor Naomi, and her faithful sympathizing friend, in their wretched cottage, looking wistfully at each other, yet neither able to suggest any means to procure subsistence. Naomi has rich relations, but they heed her not, and the rest of the Bethlehemites are too intent upon their own concerns to take any farther notice of her now she is reduced to poverty. "To labor she cannot," for age, and trouble, and fatigue have enfeebled her limbs; "to beg she is ashamed."

Here the benevolent statute which gives the poor a right to gather up what the wealthy have left, occurs to the mind of Ruth, and with much humility she solicits Naomi's permission to glean a few ears of corn after the reapers. She will not even undertake to do this lawful act which was for their mutual support without the con-

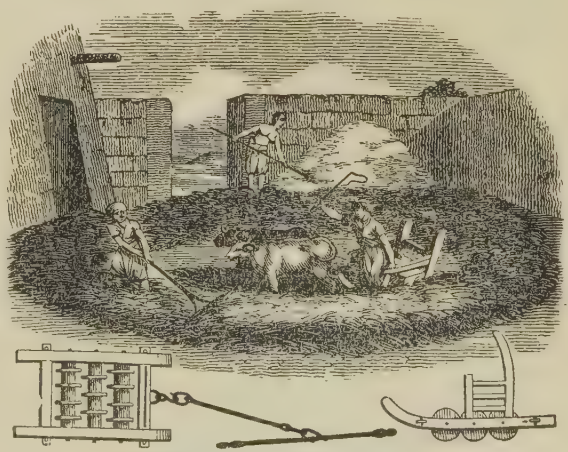
sent of her mother-in-law. Every incident in the narrative, and this in particular, gives this amiable female an inimitable grace. She is ready to expose herself to the scorching rays of the meridian sun, and to what must have been still more unpleasant, to the churlish insults of unfeeling and unmannerly rustics, to procure an evening's meal for her adopted parent.

In this conduct of Ruth what a beautiful lesson is exhibited to all young persons! If she was so kindly affectioned and so respectful to one who was not allied to her in blood, how ought we to foster, care for, and reverence our natural parents! She was a Moabitess, yet we see her fulfilling the fifth commandment in a sense the most extended; and upon her descended that blessing which enforces it: "Honor thy father and mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee."

Naomi readily consented to the proposal of Ruth, who instantly set out in this humiliating but honest employment. That gracious Being who guideth the steps of his faithful servants, conducted Ruth to the field of Boaz, a mighty man of wealth, and a near relation of Elimelech. This was not a preconcerted scheme between her and Naomi, but one of those incidents to which the careless and skeptical give the name of chance, but which the considerate and pious term the order of Providence.

He who led Ruth to this spot, directed the footsteps of Boaz also the same way. It is true, the good man came to superintend his servants, but the whole narrative shows the divine agency and goodness so remarkably, that even this visit of Boaz to his field, at the time when Ruth was gleaning, is a material link in the chain.

The excellent qualities of this wealthy man may be discerned the first moment he appears in view. Boaz enters his field, not with an imperious look, a threatening aspect, and uttering profane expressions to his reapers, but with a sweet and familiar accent he says, "The LORD be with you." His first language is a devout prayer. The blessing of a good man is grateful, and the pious sentiment falls upon the heart like refreshing dew upon the mown grass. His servants were men of a like spirit with their master. They returned his benediction in the same devotional strain, "The LORD bless thee." How powerful is the effect of good example in persons who have numerous dependants. Boaz is a mild and religious master, and it is no wonder that he has industrious and pious servants. They are won by the pleasantness of his demeanor, they are awed by the contemplation of his sanctity, they love him for his kind attentions, and they pursue their work with cheerfulness and fidelity. His prosperity gives them pleasure, because they are sensible that he deserves it, by making a proper use of his great wealth. Feeling themselves therefore interested in his welfare, these pious rustics return his devout salutation with this affectionate wish, "The LORD bless thee." Too many employers, when the blessings of heaven descend upon their estates, when their pastures are filled with flocks, and their fields are rich in golden grain, instead of feeling a becoming gratitude to the Author of every good gift, gentle to their servants, and liberal to the poor, are unthankful to GOD, churlish to all around them, and inhumanly deprive the "stranger, the fatherless, and the widow" of the few straggling ears of corn which are trod beneath the reapers' feet.



THRESHING IN THE EAST. THE FAN.

Not so the wealthy farmer of Bethlehem, for he feared GOD, and therefore he had compassion on the poor and needy. Observing among the gleaners a young female,

RUTH AND BOAZ.

whose countenance and manner showed that she had seen better days, his curiosity was excited to know who she was.

When he was informed by his steward that this was the young Moabitess who had shown such friendship for Naomi, the heart of Boaz was moved, and he immediately encouraged her in the tenderest manner to glean in no other field, but to abide by his maidens, and to take the refreshment which was provided.

Ruth, who was surprised at such generosity in one to whom she was utterly unknown, "bowed herself to the ground," and poured out the effusions of a grateful heart. The noble-minded Boaz cheers her by his approbation of her dutiful conduct, and by uttering this expressive prayer: "The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD GOD of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust."

The delicacy and liberality of Boaz were manifested in giving Ruth into the charge of his maidens, in strictly prohibiting the young men from treating her with unbecoming familiarity, and in directing "the reapers to let fall some handfuls from the sheaves on purpose for her."

When Ruth returned in the evening to Naomi, and informed her of all that had happened, and in whose field she had gleaned, the venerable woman saw immediately that the divine hand was bringing about good for them: "Blessed," says she, "be he of the LORD who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead." Ruth ii. 20.

The remaining part of this story is intimately connected with two remarkable statutes in the Israelitish code. The one was, that if the elder branch of a family sold any part of his land, the next of kin had a right to redeem it, and if he refused to do so the privilege descended to the next in succession. The other law was, that if the elder branch died leaving a widow without children, the next kinsman should marry her, and so raise seed to his brother. Both these statutes were designed to preserve the tribes, and to keep them distinct from each other, till the time should come when in the birth of the MESSIAH there should be no longer any need of those distinctions.

Naomi knew well the obligation of these precepts, and as she herself was now too old to think of a husband, she transferred her right to Ruth. By her direction, therefore, this young woman changed her attire, and entered the thrashing-floor where Boaz usually reposed himself at the close of the day.

When Boaz awoke he was surprised at perceiving a female at his feet; but on learning who she was, and hearing her claim upon him, he was pleased with her conduct, and promised to fulfil the law, provided the kinsman who was nearer than himself failed in performing his duty. Here Ruth rested till the dawn of the morning, and was then sent back to her mother-in-law with a present. In this conduct, those who judge according to modern ideas and habits may be disposed perhaps to censure or to ridicule both Naomi and Ruth. The Scripture narrative, however, is a sober tale, and contains nothing that can offend the most delicate mind.

The claim of Ruth, as the widow of Mahlon, was indisputable, and it was so acknowledged by Boaz. We have seen the goodness of this man's heart, his amiable condescension, his regard to virtue, and his fervent piety. Had Ruth's behavior, then, been indecent, or such as the most rigid purity would not have allowed in that age, he would have spurned her from his presence. But, on the contrary, he commends her conduct, promises her justice, and sends her home in such a manner as shows his sacred regard both for the reality and the very form of virtue. "Let it not be known," says he, "that a woman came into the floor." Ch. iii. 14. The same day Boaz called his relation before the elders of the city, but though the man was willing enough to redeem the land, he was not so well pleased with the condition annexed to it, and therefore readily waived his right in favor of Boaz. Thus was the fidelity of Ruth rewarded, and she who the day before was a companion for servants became the next their mistress, and from a state of penury to be the wife of the wealthiest man in Bethlehem. The affections of Boaz were not captivated by the youth, gayety, or beauty of Ruth, but by qualities of a more exalted and permanent value: "for all the city of my people doth know," says he, "that thou art a virtuous woman." In this case then Boaz himself merited congratulation as much as Ruth, for what can be so estimable as a woman of this description? "Her price is indeed," as the mother of King Lemuel truly observes, "far above rubies." Prov. xxxi. 10 to the end.

The ALMIGHTY blessed this marriage with a son, to whom was given the name of Obed. This child Naomi took and laid in her bosom and became a nurse unto it.

Thus were the latter days of this good woman better than the beginning, and the evening of her life compensated for all the crosses and distresses which she had experienced in the land of Moab. The dutiful conduct and unshaken faith of Ruth were abundantly rewarded by the GOD of Israel, for whom she had renounced all things, and her story is preserved, as an example of piety, for the instruction of all generations.

On her was bestowed the high honor of being the great-grandmother of David, and consequently of Him who was the Hope of Israel, and the REDEEMER of the human race. Well therefore may we adopt the pious exclamation of Bishop Hall: "O the sure and bountiful payments of the ALMIGHTY! Who ever came under his wing in vain? Who ever lost by trusting him? Who ever forsook the Moab of this world for the true Israel, and did not at last rejoice in the change?"

RAMA.

SAMUEL.*

BORN ABOUT THE YEAR OF THE WORLD, 2848; DIED, 2947.

HE want of children among the ancient Israelites was considered as one of the sorest afflictions that could befall a married woman. The promise of the MESSIAH had such a strong influence upon their minds, that the desire of giving birth to the "REDEEMER of his people" seemed to be a predominant principle in every female breast. Besides, it was a prevalent opinion that "children were a heritage that cometh from the LORD," and the increase of a family called forth gratulation, while the childless woman lay under reproach. This gave rise to a practice which, as it never had a divine sanction, so from its usual effects it was evidently displeasing to the ALMIGHTY. In imitation of Abraham, the Israelite, when he despaired of having children by his wife, was wont to take another; but it is remarkable that in most of the cases of this sort recorded in Scripture, the domestic harmony was broken, and the despised and rejected woman became at last the "joyful mother of children." The most eminent representatives of the MESSIAH, as Isaac and Joseph, and Samson and Samuel, were the offspring of women concerning whom there seemed to be no hope, and hereby GOD intended to make that power known, by which the incarnation of the REDEEMER and the fruitfulness of his church were to be effected in the latter days, when, according to St. Paul, the prophetical injunction of Isaiah was obeyed: "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child!" Isaiah liv. 1. Gal. iv. 27.

But though polygamy was not from the beginning, and never had any encouragement from Heaven, yet in ancient times many good men fell into the practice, from too great a solicitude to perpetuate their names in Israel.

Elkanah, a wealthy Levite, of the city of Ephraim, had been married some years to Hannah, a woman of extraordinary humility and piety, without obtaining a child. The character of Elkanah was highly praiseworthy; he served his GOD faithfully with all his house, and the misfortunes of his wife did not alienate his affections from her. But having that desire of a family, which was common to every one of his nation, he adopted a method, which, as it had been done by the patriarchs, he conceived could not be wrong. He introduced another, or a subordinate wife, into his house, who brought him sons and daughters. In the joy of his heart, Elkanah gave portions to these children, and to their mother Peninnah, but to Hannah he gave "a worthy portion," for a more distinguished testimony of his love.

This partiality of Elkanah seems to have roused the jealousy of Peninnah, and, as little minds are always disposed to triumph over the misfortunes of those they hate, she reproached Hannah with her infirmity, and provoked her by constant abuse. The good woman was greatly distressed by this base conduct of her rival, but we neither find that she made any reply to Peninnah, or uttered a single complaint to her husband. She wept, indeed, and could not eat. Unjust revilings for unavoidable misfortunes

* RAMAH.—On the preceding page we present the reader with a view of RAMA, or RAMAH, a city of Benjamin, about six miles north of Jerusalem, (Josh. xviii. 25,) and famous as the residence of the prophet SAMUEL 1 Sam. i. 19; vii. 17; viii. 4; xxv. 1.

cannot but affect the spirits of a meek and gentle female. The grief of Hannah was soon discerned by her affectionate husband, who endeavored to cheer her mind by the most endearing behavior.

It was the yearly custom of Elkanah to go up to the tabernacle of the LORD in Shiloh, with all his family, and to offer sacrifices. On one of these great solemnities Peninnah appears to have taken the ungenerous advantage of publicly offering insult to the dejected Hannah. The place and occasion should have called for compassion, amicable intercourse, and reciprocal good offices; but this feast upon the sacrifice was a feast of strife, and the peace of Elkanah's family was rent in pieces by his imprudence in taking into it an unworthy woman, to the injury of one who possessed every virtue. Hannah murmured not, nor complained. She did not accuse her adversary to Elkanah, nor reproach Elkanah for his folly. She went and poured out the sorrow of her heart before the LORD in his sanctuary.

Religious sincerity is not to be determined by the length or the loudness of our devotions. The silent breathings of a contrite heart are more acceptable to Him who seeth every desire, and marks the progress of every motive in the soul of man, than the noisy and verbose prayers of the Pharisee. Poor Hannah prayed with earnestness, but her voice was not heard. The lips were seen to move, and her agitated countenance betrayed the emotions of her mind. But to show how liable the best of men are to err in judging of others, the minister of GOD, who watched Hannah, thought she was intoxicated, and said, in a tone of severity, "How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee." Sam. i. 14.

If the mind of Hannah was already depressed by affliction, so heinous a charge, pronounced by the high priest, must have increased her sorrow. Some would have spurned at the accusation with an indignant pride; but this placid spirit gently vindicated herself to Eli, and treated him with the greatest reverence. "No, my lord," says she, "I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto."

If a "soft answer turneth away wrath," the meek and pious reply of Hannah could not but remove the prejudice of Eli. He was convinced that he had judged too hastily of this good woman, and therefore he joined his supplication to hers that the LORD would grant her desire. Hannah had made a solemn vow that if the LORD would bless her with a son, he should be devoted wholly unto his service. Her prayer was heard, and she bare a son, to whom she gave the name of SAMUEL, "because," says she, "I have asked him of the LORD."

Elkanah continued his pious custom of going up at a stated period to the tabernacle of the LORD in Shiloh, but Hannah deferred accompanying him till the child should be weaned. It was not from a want of gratitude to the ALMIGHTY, or from an undue affection to her infant, that she neglected to attend the public service of the sanctuary. She considered the child as a trust committed to her by the LORD, and she was resolved not to leave him to the care of others. Rightly did this good woman consider that she was fulfilling her duty as much in Ramah as in Shiloh, while she was watching over the health and disposition of her child. She was determined to fulfil her vow; and as Samuel must, in that case, necessarily be separated from her, she would carefully instil into his mind those principles of piety which were the most likely to preserve him from the contagion of evil examples, when he should be far removed from her observation. Elkanah entirely acquiesced in the conduct of his beloved wife, and went up without her to the yearly sacrifice. But no sooner was Samuel weaned than his excellent parent became mindful of her vow; and as she had received him from the LORD, to his service she was resolved he should be dedicated. It must have been some struggle between piety and affection to yield up her only child, the fruit of so many fervent desires and earnest prayers; but Hannah was a woman of no common spirit. Though meek and gentle, her faith was firm and resolute. The vow which she made in Shiloh was remembered with a sacred regard; and when the child was sufficiently grown to be able to attend on the high priest, she took him with her to Shiloh with the accustomed offerings. There she informed Eli of what, perhaps, the old man had long since forgotten, that she was the woman who at such a time had prayed with so much earnestness in that place; that this child was the object of her desire, and that

ELKANAH AND HANNAH BEFORE ELI

as she had vowed to devote him to the service of GOD, she was now come to fulfil her obligation.

The high priest cheerfully accepted a donation, which evidently came from the ALMIGHTY, "and the child ministered unto him."

Instead of weeping and lamenting over her child at the thoughts of parting from him, Hannah broke out into a song of thanksgiving, which exhibits all the beauty of Hebrew poesy, and bears a strong affinity to that evangelical hymn which flowed from the lips of the holy Virgin at the conception of the MESSIAH.

The advantages of a pious education were never more strikingly displayed than in the case of Samuel. Hannah, who never had a child before, carefully attended to the first duty of a mother, in bringing him "up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD." Where there is but one, it is too often spoiled by maternal indulgence; and the evil humors of corrupt nature, from the want of early correction, become headstrong and unmanageable at a more advanced period. This was not the case here. Hannah, though of the sweetest disposition, would not suffer Samuel to be separated from her till she had well trained his opening mind to the practice of piety; and well it was that she did so, for the sons of Eli were, by his indulgence, youths of the most profligate characters. Their shameful conduct was offensive in the sight of all Israel; and sheltering themselves under the high authority of their father, they were guilty of the most heinous acts of oppression and sacrilege. With such persons it was dangerous for a child so young as Samuel to associate, but his mind was seasoned with grace, and he grew up before the LORD.

The privileges of Eli's sons were great, and their education, no doubt, had been liberal; but the want of discipline was destructive of their principles, and his foolish indulgence proved the source of their ruin and of his own. What a difference between the exalted, well-informed high priest, and the lowly, simple wife of Elkanah! He, by his office, ought to have paid the strictest regard to the morals and conduct of his sons; yet even when informed of their evil practices, he slightly chided them, but withheld that chastisement which it became him to minister as the judge of Israel, and as the father of a family. Hannah, whose sphere of action and degree of knowledge were confined within narrow limits, scrupulously fulfils her solemn vow, and is careful to prepare her Samuel for the service of the sanctuary. The effects in both cases were natural. The sons of Eli plunged deeper into guilt, till at last they met with an untimely death, and hastened that of their father. Samuel was soon distinguished by the highest marks of the divine favor, became the prophet of the Most High, and the judge of Israel, while his pious mother obtained more children to be the comfort of her old age, and had the satisfaction of seeing her son exalted in the favor of GOD and man.

Once a year had Hannah the delightful gratification of embracing her beloved child, when she went up with her husband to the public sacrifice in Shiloh. On these occasions it was her custom to "make him a little coat;" and let not this simple circumstance be considered as beneath the pen of the historian, or as detracting from the gravity of sacred writ. This little coat, like that which Jacob gave to Joseph, was the effect of parental affection; but this of Samuel is contemplated by us with more pleasure than that of the patriarch. His was not a gaudy vestment, calculated to excite vanity in his own mind, and envy in that of his brothers; but it was merely a needful garment, to be worn on a solemn festival in his official capacity, as the attendant of the high priest. With how much pleasing satisfaction did his pious mother work upon this "little coat," which was to adorn the person of her child, who was the gift and the servant of GOD! Many grateful reflections on the mercies she had experienced doubtless arose in her mind while she was thus employed, and many fond expectations did it produce of the future eminence of one who already gave sufficient promises of distinguished piety and usefulness.

It must have been very delightful to Elkanah and his wife to hear the praises of their son, when they paid their customary visit to the holy place where he served. Nothing can equal the satisfaction which the pious parent experiences in finding his offspring, the object of so many cares and supplications, walking in the way of holiness, and increasing in favor both "with the LORD and also with men." Sam. ii. 26. The high priest was exceedingly fond of Samuel, whose turn of mind exhibited an affecting contrast to that of his own children. He saw in this child the seeds of wisdom and virtue expanding into full bloom, and promising the highest advantages to the church of GOD. When, therefore, the parents of Samuel came up to Shiloh, the

venerable man, with great goodness of heart, "blessed them for the loan which they had lent to the LORD," and prayed that Hannah might bear more children to Elkanah. The devout wish of Eli was answered, and this excellent woman became the mother of three more sons and two daughters.

The high priest was sincerely religious himself, but he wanted zeal and fortitude to correct abuses. He was well informed of the shameful conduct of his sons; but instead of punishing them as the enormity of their crimes deserved, he contented himself with slightly reprimanding them. The rebukes of the aged are never respected by debauched libertines; and Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, were young men of the most abandoned principles. Yet he suffered them still to administer in sacred things, and by so doing, the solemn service of the sanctuary became of little esteem among the people. For this neglect of his duty as high priest and judge of Israel, the anger of the LORD was kindled against Eli, and the divine displeasure was denounced against him by a prophet specially commissioned for the purpose. Notwithstanding this, the indolent old man relapsed into his lethargy, and took little notice of the crying evils which called for the administration of justice. The sacred historian informs us, "that the word of the LORD was precious in those days, for that there was no open vision." Sam. iii. 1. It was a time of darkness and ignorance, and "every one did that which was right in his own eyes." Let the public administration be suspended, let religious instruction be omitted, and the manners of a people will soon become grossly immoral. Those persons whose place it was to expound the law of GOD by their preaching, and to recommend it by the purity of their lives, were the most abominable violators of its sacred precepts, and in consequence "the word of the LORD was precious, or but little known in those days."

So deplorable was the condition of the Israelitish church and nation when Samuel was called by the ALMIGHTY to deliver his judgments to Eli. At the silent and solemn hour of midnight, when the lights of the temple were become dim, and all the Levites were sunk in a deep sleep, the voice of the LORD called upon Samuel. Eli has neglected to act for the honor of GOD as became his office, and therefore he must receive his sentence from the mouth of a child. Samuel, on hearing the voice, starts from his couch, and runs to the chamber of the high priest, saying, "Here am I." He had so habituated himself to obedience, that though he lay at a distance from Eli, he ran instantly at the call, and repeated it three times, declaring constantly that he must have been called by him. Eli, surprised at the diligence of his servant, began to think there must be something more than human in the circumstance, and therefore told him to lie down again, and when he heard the voice to say, "Speak, LORD, for thy servant heareth." Samuel did as he was instructed; and the LORD declared to him the terrible things which should speedily befall Eli and his family. The youth was not willing to wound the feelings of his aged lord, by revealing unto him the message he had received. His modesty, piety, and affection are admirably displayed in the whole of this awful transaction. He arose in the morning, opened the doors of the temple, and went about his ordinary business, like a faithful servant, no way elated at the distinguished honor which had been conferred upon him, or officiously zealous to relate the particulars to Eli. But the old man was convinced that Samuel had been favored with a divine communication, and his misgiving heart foreboded that he had a deep interest in the message which had been delivered. He therefore called the youth to him, and in a solemn but affectionate manner adjured him to declare all that he had heard. Samuel, without any prevarication, related every part of the divine message, which Eli heard with patient attention, and then meekly exclaimed, "It is the LORD, let him do what seemeth him good."

All the words of Samuel were literally accomplished. A war broke out between Israel and the Philistines, in which the former were defeated, the ark of the LORD was captured, Hophni and Phinehas fell among the slain, and Eli, on hearing of this disaster, fell from his seat, and expired immediately.

The fame of Samuel was now spread throughout all Israel, and he was universally acknowledged as a prophet of the LORD. But it was a time of great degeneracy, and many years elapsed before this eminent man could effect an entire reformation. At length his unwearied labors began to prosper, and he had the satisfaction to see a general spirit of repentance prevail among the people.

A general assembly of the elders of Israel was convened at Mizpeh, where all the

ELI AND SAMUEL.

superstitious relics of idolatry were renounced, the worship of JEHOVAH was restored, and Samuel publicly acknowledged as the judge of Israel.

The divine favor now shone once more upon this people, and they succeeded in repelling the insults of their neighbors, the Philistines, who were the most potent of all their enemies.

Samuel resided at his patrimonial house in Ramah, but he made a regular circuit once a year throughout Israel, for the purpose of administering justice. But when the infirmities of old age seem to have rendered this annual progress too burdensome, he appointed his two sons to act in his stead, as the judges of Israel.

In this act Samuel appears to have consulted his own inclination and partiality rather than the divine will. The office which he filled was of the highest importance, and required as much integrity as ability; but whatever might be the talents of these young men, their principles were bad. It was an imprudent act of indulgence in their father to vest them with an authority which was easily to be abused, and which exposed those who enjoyed it to many strong temptations. The stream of justice was soon polluted by bribery and extortion; and so flagrant was the wickedness of Samuel's sons, that the elders of Israel came to a resolution of changing their form of government. They waited upon the aged prophet, and after setting before him the bad conduct of his sons, desired him to "make them a king, that they might be like other nations." 1 Sam. viii. 5

A public spirit of dissatisfaction at the conduct of rulers generally produces a dislike of all their connexions. But this was not the case here; though the elders of Israel were highly offended, and that justly, with the behavior of Samuel's sons, they had the profoundest reverence for the prophet himself. The language of their complaint is an honorable encomium upon the character of this holy man, and a full expression of the people's regard for him. "Behold thou art old," say they, "and thy sons walk not in thy ways."

While Samuel was in his full strength, and capable of exercising the duties of his office, the people were satisfied under his government, because they were conscious of his integrity and had his sons pursued his steps, it is not probable that the people would have wished for a change. But Samuel conceived that this application was an affront to himself, and therefore he was displeased with the request which was made by the elders. This, however, did not prevent him from consulting the divine direction. Human frailty will sometimes incline the best of men to resent an injury, but a thorough sense of duty will always lead them to the throne of grace for counsel. The answer which Samuel received was different, perhaps, from what he expected; for he evidently appears to have considered the wish of the people as peculiarly offensive to the ALMIGHTY. The good man was offended at their treatment of himself and his family, and he imagined that in so doing he was merely jealous for the divine honor. But the answer which he received was calculated to convince him that he had too much concern about his own honor, for he was commanded to comply with the application which had been made. "They have not rejected thee," says the LORD, "but they have rejected me."

At the command of GOD the prophet anointed Saul to be king over Israel; and this he did with a most ready submission, for no man was ever more prompt to obey the word of the LORD than Samuel, "from his youth up." When Saul was consecrated, the man of GOD collected the statutes for the government of the kingdom into a book, and laid the same up before the LORD: after which, on resigning his judicial authority he made this affecting declaration to the people: "Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you. And now behold the king walketh before you; and I am old and gray-headed, and behold my sons are with you, and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Behold, here I am: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed, whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind my eyes therewith, and I will restore it you." What a noble challenge on laying down so responsible an office, and how becoming an upright magistrate! But Samuel spoke the language of conscious innocence, not that of petulant ostentation. The people stood abashed before their venerable leader, and, when he had ended, they replied, "Thou hast not defrauded us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand." The language of Samuel was dignified and just; that of the people was tender and grate-

ful. Having thus engaged their confidence, the holy prophet delivered to them a solemn charge, in which he laid before them the signal mercies bestowed on their nation at various times, and their sinfulness in asking for a king, like the nations around them, when their theocratical government was the highest privilege they could possess. The words of Samuel made a deep impression upon his hearers, and they loudly acknowledged that they had been guilty of a great offence. When he had thus brought them to a penitent confession of their guilt, he began to exhort them to a careful obedience of the laws of GOD, and he encouraged them so to do by an assurance that "the LORD would not forsake them for his great name's sake, because," says he, "it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people." He then concluded by expressing his tender regard for them, and his resolution of being always attentive to their welfare. "Moreover, as for me, GOD forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king." 1. Sam. xii. 22—25.

Thus did Samuel retire from his public station as a magistrate, but still retaining his sacerdotal authority, by virtue of which he denounced the judgments of the LORD against Saul for various offences.

When Saul disobeyed the divine command in saving Agag, king of the Amalekites, with a considerable part of the spoil, Samuel resumed even the regal power, and, after sharply reprehending the monarch for his conduct, proceeded to execute the will of the ALMIGHTY. This was one of those extraordinary actions which, as resulting from a particular commission of JEHOVAH, is neither to be censured nor to be imitated. He who commanded the act cannot do wrong or empower another to do it; but what was then done by virtue of his immediate injunction is not to be drawn into a precedent. From that time Samuel saw not the apostate king of Israel any more, but it is related that he "mourned for him." The sins of others, especially of those from whom the most exemplary conduct is expected, always affect the righteous with sorrow. They are grieved that the honor of GOD is injured, and their compassion for the souls of their fellow-creatures fills them with concern at their inconsiderate conduct. The LORD, having rejected Saul, commanded Samuel to anoint David, the son of Jesse, king over Israel. The prophet still retained some regard for the man whom he had consecrated, and was reluctant to obey the divine injunction. He had besides some fear that Saul's anger would provoke him to take away his life; an apprehension which is rather surprising, considering the boldness with which this good man had repeatedly rebuked the king in the sight of all Israel. But the most intrepid servants of the MOST HIGH have their fits of infirmity and unbelief; and even holy Samuel, who could in his old age, before a haughty monarch and a victorious army, destroy all their spoils, was afraid to obey the command of GOD, lest he should encounter the vengeance of man.

SAMUEL HEWS AGAG IN PIECES. — Page 224.

SAMUEL ANOINTING DAVID.

The ALMIGHTY regarded not the querulous objection of his servant, but repeated his injunction, and Samuel went as he was directed. When he came to the house of Jesse he offered a solemn sacrifice; and on seeing Eliab, the eldest son, who was tall, and of a good countenance, he immediately concluded that this was the chosen person; but the LORD said to him, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." Seven more sons did Jesse cause to pass before the prophet, but neither of them was accepted; on which he asked if these were all his children. Being told that the youngest was keeping sheep, he ordered him to be sent for; and when he arrived the man of GOD "took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren."

Having thus discharged this important commission, Samuel returned to Ramah, where he continued till his death, which happened in the year of the world 2947.

He had enjoyed throughout his long life the confidence and affection of his countrymen: for they were convinced of the uprightness of his heart and the sanctity of his life. All his actions manifested that a regard for the public good and for the honor of GOD was the ruling principle of his mind. He was sanctified from the womb, and his earliest years were devoted to the service of the LORD. Religion took possession of his heart and affections even in childhood, and procured him the favor of GOD and man. This carried him through his public offices with an unblemished reputation, and enabled him to lay down the judicial authority with conscious boldness, and secured to him not only inward peace and satisfaction, but the universal applause and gratitude of his countrymen. When he died, all Israel "were gathered together and lamented him," (1 Sam. xxv. 1,) considering his loss as that of their common father. His remains were embalmed by the affectionate tears of a whole nation, and his example is recorded as a model for imitation to all generations.

Samuel instituted those schools of the prophets, which were designed to maintain a succession of proper persons for the instruction of the people. He was the first president of this seminary, and therefore in the New Testament he is spoken of as the beginning of this succession of prophets, which lasted till the time of Malachi: "And all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have foretold of these days." Acts iii. 24.

DAVID.

BORN IN THE YEAR OF THE WORLD, 2919; DIED, 2989.

NO part of Divine Revelation has escaped the malicious censures and profane scoffs of infidels. The character of David has been attacked with peculiar severity. Much pains have been taken to give the most unfair representations of his conduct, in order to render his very name contemptible and odious. In studying the characters of the most distinguished persons recorded in the Bible, we invariably find them represented with a scrupulous regard to truth, and their actions related with a simple exactness, which shows that there could be no design to disguise their failings or to exaggerate their virtues. This is more than can be said of any other history, ancient or modern. All human writers have their partialities and their prejudices, and the more they enter into their subject the more apt are they to be misled by their peculiar bias. But the sacred historians were under the immediate direction of the Spirit of truth, and consequently they related facts as they really happened, and delineated characters as they truly were. This is the glory of the sacred Scriptures, that no artifice is made use of therein to conceal the imperfections, the follies, and the crimes of men, who in other respects are held up as objects of admiration, and who by their repentance, and faith, and piety, are set before us as examples for our imitation. Human nature is deeply depraved, and is continually prone to evil. This is the prevailing doctrine of the Bible, and it is incontestably proved by daily experience. The lives of the best of men, therefore, must exhibit this feature of degradation, and the Scriptures uniformly describe them as "being of like passions with ourselves," as yielding sometimes to temptation, and as frequently falling into error. Thus, in fact, what inconsiderate skeptics have made a matter of objection to the holy

volume, constitutes one of its prime excellences; for if the patriarchs, and kings, and prophets, and apostles, had been described as without failings, doubts would justly have been raised of the veracity of their historians. As it is, we are furnished with a proof of no small force, that "all Scripture has been given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Tim. iii. 16.

These remarks are necessary to be well weighed and understood, when we are employed in reading the lives of eminent Scripture characters; and in none more than in considering the history of that illustrious prince, who has been dignified with the appellation of "being the man after GOD's own heart."

We have seen the Israelitish nation discontented with their peculiar form of government, and desiring a king, that they might resemble their neighbors. The ALMIGHTY attended to their request, and by his command Samuel the prophet consecrated Saul king over Israel. Thus the corrupt principles and practices of mankind are sometimes overruled by the sovereign Disposer of events, to bring to pass his own wise and mysterious decrees. The MESSIAH was ordained to spring from the royal house of David, and the disquieted minds of Israel effect a change in the constitution which brings about the exaltation of the shepherd youth to the sceptre.

Jesse, the father of David, was the grandson of Boaz and Ruth, whose history has already afforded us both entertainment and instruction. He was a wealthy man in Bethlehem, and had eight sons, of whom David was the youngest and the favorite. The elder sons of Jesse were men of renown in the army of Saul, and the youngest was employed in keeping his father's sheep in Bethlehem, where his principal pleasure consisted in meditating upon the works of GOD, and in singing his praises to the melody of his harp.

He was engaged in his pastoral occupation when Samuel came to his father's house to consecrate him, according to the divine command, king instead of Saul. Seven of Jesse's sons passed before the prophet, but he received no monition to perform the solemn ceremony upon either. This induced him to inquire, whether the Bethlehemite had no more children. On being informed that the youngest was in the field, he caused him to be sent for, and the instant he appeared Samuel took a horn of oil and poured it upon his head in the presence of all his brethren. It is observable that Saul was consecrated with only a vial of oil, but when David was anointed, the prophet made use of a horn, which held a greater quantity. May not this have been prefigurative of the super-eminent rank of David, and especially of Him who was still more exalted, even "the true king of Zion, who was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows?" A horn was the striking emblem of power, and David obtained dominion over all his enemies, leaving his kingdom in a state of prosperity and peace. Thus also is the spiritual David "a horn of salvation to his church," from whom she receives grace, strength, and everlasting security.

From that time the Spirit of the LORD rested upon David; but the circumstance of his consecration was carefully concealed within the circle of his own family, for in all likelihood, his friends were apprehensive of experiencing the vengeance of Saul, should he become acquainted with the action of Samuel. That monarch was now fallen into a gloomy and desponding state. The Spirit of the LORD was gone from him; and his conscience was disturbed with dismal reflections and fearful apprehensions. A mind ill at ease, renders every person around him uncomfortable. The servants of Saul, for their own sakes as much as for the sake of their master, began to devise methods to cure him of his melancholy. That which first appeared to them as the most likely to answer the purpose was the power of music. There is something soothing and tranquillizing in the strains of harmony; and the attendants of Saul were in hopes that the skill of the minstrel would lull the agonies of his wounded mind. The proposal was attended to, and a qualified person was ordered to be provided. David's abilities were known to one of the courtiers, and his praises were reported in such strong terms, that a messenger was despatched to Jesse with a request that his son might be sent to the king. David accordingly repaired to court, where he rendered himself so acceptable to the afflicted monarch by his skill and amiable qualities, that another respectful message was sent to Jesse, to desire leave for his son to continue. Thus did the gracious wisdom of GOD lead the future king of Israel to the royal palace, and introduce him to the heads of the nation, among whom he might acquire some of that

PLAYING ON THE HARP BEFORE THE KING.

knowledge in the ways of men, and in the arts of government, which, though necessary, could not be acquired on the solitary plains of Bethlehem.

Saul, it is said, loved David, and made him his armor-bearer. Courtly favor and elevated distinctions are apt to corrupt minds educated in privacy, and unused to the world. But the principles of piety had taken deep root in the heart of David; and the gayeties of a palace, honorable appointments, and the smiles of a monarch, could not alienate his affections from his native home, or make him ashamed of his humble original. How long he continued at the court of Saul is not mentioned, for the Scripture history passes over those periods of time which afford no incidents of public concern. With pleasure and admiration we behold this amiable youth returned to his paternal mansion, and resuming his shepherd's crook. He readily quits the gaudy scenes of courtly grandeur, the frivolities and allurements incidental to such a situation, and in the very opening of life, when the passions are most liable to be captivated by false impressions, he returns to his fleecy charge, and on the plains of Bethlehem sings the high praises of his GOD to the sound of the harp. From some of the psalms of this sweet singer of Israel, it is evident that the night season saw him thus employed. In the stillness of the midnight hour, when all nature was hushed to re-

pose, when not a wind rustled amidst the trees to disturb his thoughts, his sou. was elevated to his Creator, and the moon and the stars were so many ascending steps which conducted him to the throne of God. At such a time it was that he breathed out this sublime and devout aspiration: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor." Ps. viii. Here one might imagine, that after contemplating the stupendous works of God, the psalmist ends in admiring that exceeding grace which hath distinguished man above all other creatures, but an evangelical expositor assures us that the divine composer had a higher object in view; and that in celebrating the supremacy of the son of man, David meant the Messiah, who hath obtained the pre-eminence over all created things, in heaven and upon earth.

Thus in his juvenile days was David made to see and to predict the glories of His reign, whose type he was ordained to be in many important respects.

But we hasten now to one of the most distinguished events of his life. Not long after his return to Bethlehem, a war broke out between the Israelites and the Philistines. Saul, who seems in a great measure to have been relieved from his despondency, musters his forces and marches against the enemy. The contending armies encamped over against each other on the sides of opposite hills, watching a fit opportunity to begin an attack. While they lay in this position, neither of them willing to run the risk of an action, a Philistine of extraordinary stature and strength, named Goliath, came into the plain that lay between the two armies, attended by his shield-bearer, and in a haughty tone demanded a champion to fight with, upon the condition that the nation to whom the vanquished belonged should become tributary to the other.

Fear and terror seized upon the Israelitish army, and not one among all its warriors would venture to encounter so formidable a foe, though Saul had offered profuse riches, high distinctions, and even his own daughter to the man who should slay him.

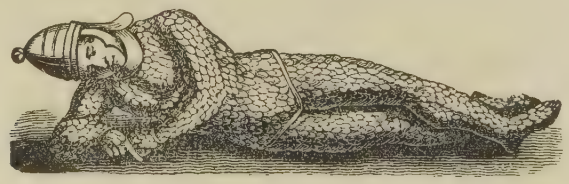
Every morning and evening, for forty days, did this arrogant monster traverse the plain between the two armies, repeating his challenge, and accompanying it with blasphemies and threats. Saul was despondent: his soldiers partook of his dejection, and all Israel stood abashed in the presence of the giant. In this posture stood affairs when Jesse, whose three eldest sons accompanied Saul, sent David to the camp to inquire after their welfare and to take them some necessaries, together with a present for the captain of their company. When the youth arrived he hastened to embrace his brethren, and while he was talking with them the champion of the Philistines drew near, on which the Israelites fled. This circumstance could not but interest the heroic youth. He was curious to know all the particulars; and while some of the soldiers were relating to him the high rewards which the king had offered to the man who should conquer him, David betrayed the most lively emotions. He wondered that, amongst all the warriors of Israel, none was hardy enough to engage in so glorious an undertaking; and he repeated his inquiries with an eagerness which gave great offence to Eliab, his eldest brother, who reproved him in severe terms for "leaving his sheep and coming to the camp." David replied, in a firm but respectful tone, "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" 1 Sam. xvii. 29. Turning then from his brother he resumed the subject which had roused his feelings into heroic ardor, and having expressed his contempt of the uncircumcised Philistine in terms which plainly indicated that he was willing to encounter him, his words were reported to Saul. The king was curious to see this champion; but when David appeared before him he was astonished to behold a rustic lad without a weapon, when he had expected to meet with a hardy veteran clad in armor. On being introduced into the royal presence, David boldly expressed his resolution of "fighting with the Philistine;" but Saul rejected the offer, saying, "Thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." The observation of the king of Israel was reasonable, according to human appearances and judgment, but David was actuated by another spirit, and knew that the hand of the Lord was with him. But to remove the objection raised against him on account of his youth, he related an instance of his rescuing a lamb which had been taken from his flock by a lion and a bear, and his slaying both those powerful animals. The manner in which he described this unequal contest, and the inference which he drew from it, exhibit unequalled modesty, piety, and intrepidity:—"Thy servant slew

ANCIENT WARRIOR AND ARMOR-BEARER.

both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."

THE LION.

The faith and resolution of the youth struck Saul with astonishment. He concluded that David was inspired with a divine courage, and he consented to his request. The royal armor was put upon the youthful hero, but finding it cumbrous, he put it off, and



COAT OF MAIL.

resolved to trust to his sling and a stone. Choosing some pebbles from a brook, he put them in his shepherd's bag, and with his staff in his hand hastened into the valley to meet his formidable antagonist. As usual, Goliath appeared, and being informed that a combatant awaited him, he looked around, but seeing only a ruddy boy without armor, he exclaimed, "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And he cursed David by his gods." The arrogant and presumptuous Philistine expected to meet with some hardy warrior with whom he might wage a glorious contest: what then must have been his mortification to be encountered by a shepherd's boy clad in a russet coat, and who had no warlike weapon in his hand! Goliath concluded himself sure of a conquest, even though he should be assaulted by the most valiant of all the tribes: but this interview with David was a mockery which provoked his rage to

blasphemy. After venting his impious execrations upon his youthful antagonist, he challenged him to approach with a terrific menace; "Come to me," says he, "and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field." The presumption of the giant proved his destruction. He could see no possibility of danger from a boy who had neither sword nor spear, and therefore he regarded him as a prey which he might destroy at his pleasure. David was unmoved by the appearance and menaces of his adversary. He replied to his blasphemous and arrogant challenge in these animated and prophetic terms:—

VULTURE'S HEAD.

"Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the GOD of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth: that all the earth may know that there is a GOD in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our

DAVID APPROACHING GOLIATH.

hands." This declaration touched the pride of the Philistine to the quick, and instantly he hastened to crush the stripling to the earth: David was equally eager; the rival

armies were looking on with anxious expectation, but the contest was soon terminated, for a stone flung by the hand of the shepherd youth, and guided by the power of Omnipotence, entered into the giant's forehead, and he fell prostrate upon the earth. Thus doth the great Ruler of the universe frequently order events, that man may see and acknowledge a divine providence in all things, and that human might, wisdom, and contrivance, are nothing when he is determined to level the haughty and to exalt the meek.

The sudden and unexpected fall of Goliath struck a panic into the whole Philistine army, and they instantly fled; but in the pursuit which followed, great numbers of them were slain. David, on returning from his victory, bearing the head of Goliath in his hand, was met by Abner, the Israelitish general, who conducted him into the tent of Saul. The king having inquired who he was, the youth modestly replied, "I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite." It may seem strange that Saul should so soon have forgotten a youth for whom he had expressed so much regard as to make him his armor-bearer. Hence some have conjectured that this transaction happened before David was called to court, to sooth the discomposed spirits of the king by his skill on the harp. This, however, is by no means satisfactory; for it is immediately said, that "Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house," which could not be true if that conjecture be admitted. It seems most reasonable, that the disorder under which Saul had labored was of such a nature, that when he recovered, the remembrance of what had happened was gone. In distractions of the brain, this is not uncommon, and when the mental faculties are restored, all that has passed appears as a dream. Saul, therefore, might well have forgotten the person of David, even though the hurry of war had not contributed to destroy the remembrance of an humble minstrel.

While David stood before Saul he attracted the notice and admiration of Jonathan the son of the monarch. The courage, the modesty, and the amiable demeanor of the gallant hero, won the heart of the prince, and from that moment, in the beautiful language of Scripture, "the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." 1 Sam. xviii. 1.

The king of Israel could not but express his gratitude to one who had rendered him such an essential service, and he accordingly gave David a principal command in his army. But this favor lasted not long. When the army returned from their successful campaign against the Philistines, they were welcomed home by the women "out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music." In the chorus sung at this triumphal entry the women took delight in celebrating the name and exploits of the son of Jesse, and this they did in such terms as roused the envy and hatred of the king. "And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." This high flown strain of panegyric offended the monarch, but instead of imputing it to the fervid zeal of female admiration, he immediately conceived an implacable hatred against the person who was the subject of their praises. It grieved him to find that the people felt so much gratitude for David, as to exalt his exploit

EGYPTIAN HARP.

above the achievements of their monarch; and he began to be apprehensive that the aspiring youth might even prove a powerful rival, especially as the tide of popularity ran so strongly in his favor.

It is therefore not to be wondered at that these evil thoughts should produce a return of his former complaint, and bring him into a melancholy state.

Again the skill of David was exercised to free Saul from his malady, and to chase away the black clouds which disturbed his mind. But the person who was wont to be successful in relieving the afflicted monarch, now proved the cause of his disorder; so that, instead of being cheered by his minstrelsy, Saul was irritated against him, and endeavored to take away his life. David escaped twice from the javelin which the treacherous Saul cast at him, but still he continued to discharge his duty as a faithful servant; and the king not being able to endure his presence, perhaps from a presentiment of his future grandeur, gave him a situation in the army. In this post he behaved with so much discretion as to win the affections of the whole nation; and the more his popularity increased, the greater hatred did Saul entertain against him. But the evil-minded monarch was afraid of using open violence to rid himself of the man whom he regarded as his rival; and therefore, under the pretence of friendship, he employed him in some dangerous expeditions against the Philistines. He was in hopes that David would fall a victim to his ardent desire of glory, and to stimulate him the more, offered him his eldest daughter in marriage. David was successful; but instead of receiving the promised reward, he had the mortification to see her bestowed upon another. Saul was afterwards informed that his youngest daughter Michal was in love with David. The report, so far from giving offence, afforded him pleasure; for, says he, "I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." What an abominable father must this man have been, who could so far trifle with the tender sentiments of his daughter as to employ them for the express purpose of destroying the object of her affections! Yet Saul, like many others, had no concern about the happiness of his daughter, provided he could but accomplish his own wicked purposes. Saul, perceiving that David had an inclination for the princess, offered his consent to their union on condition that he should undertake a hazardous enterprise against the Philistines. It was the wish of this treacherous prince that David would fall in the attempt; and he valued not the lives of his subjects, provided he could but rid himself of the man whom he hated. Contrary to his expectation, David succeeded in this expedition, and Michal was the reward of his valor. This alliance, however, so far from subduing the rancor of Saul, only enflamed it into diabolical fury. He stooped so low as to command his servants to slay David secretly, and even charged Jonathan, the heir apparent of his crown, to assassinate his friend. The gallant prince spurned the abominable commission, and warned David of the danger which surrounded him. He had even the courage to plead his cause before Saul, and he did it with so much eloquence as to produce a momentary compunction in the heart of the tyrant. A reconciliation was effected. Saul swore that he would no more attempt to injure his son-in-law, and David "was in his presence as in times past." But this tranquil season lasted not long. In a new war which broke out between Israel and the Philistines, David gained additional renown by vanquishing the enemies of his country. That which should have endeared him to Saul only served to revive the seeds of envy and malice. A despondent, or rather a malignant spirit, seized the evil-minded monarch. David exerted his skill to remove his chagrin, but Saul had so little regard for honor or gratitude, that he again treacherously attempted his life. His hatred grew so inveterate that David was constrained to take refuge with Samuel, thinking that with the minister of the Most High he should be safe. But religious ties

BEDS OR DIVANS.

had long lost their influence upon the misguided prince. He was abandoned to an apostate and a perverse spirit; and he followed David with a determination of slaying him even in the sanctuary. But JEHOVAH watched over the life of his servant. David was apprized of his adversary's approach, and hastened to the arms of his beloved Jonathan. The gallant prince could scarcely believe that his parent was so ungrateful and sacrilegious: but he soon found that minds filled with envy are not to be bound by vows and covenants. He again asserted the cause of his friend at his father's table, and in the presence of the great officers of the court. The zeal of Jonathan roused the fury of Saul; he loaded his son with opprobrious language, treated him as a base traitor, and aimed at him a dagger which missed its deadly purpose. The generous prince arose from table indignantly, and went in quest of David. This interview was most affectionate; they embraced each other and wept. A solemn covenant was entered into between them; and in much sorrow of heart they parted, Jonathan returning to the city, and David fleeing to the land of strangers. On the way the fugitive stopped at the house of the LORD, and being faint and weary, solicited some provisions from the priest. It chanced that there was no bread in the house but that which was set apart for sacred purposes. The exigency of David however prevailed on Ahimelech, and he gave him five loaves. This circumstance our blessed SAVIOUR adduced to reprove the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who censured him for permitting his disciples to gather ears of corn on the Sabbath day. David also obtained from this benevolent priest the sword of Goliath, which had been laid up in the tabernacle as a memorial of the Divine goodness. From hence he escaped to Gath, where, to avoid the resentment of the people, who had sufficient cause to be jealous of him, he counterfeited madness. Perhaps insanity among those early nations might be regarded as sacred, as it is among the inhabitants of those regions to this day. Let this be as it may, David saved himself by this stratagem, but still not thinking it safe to continue in Gath, he removed with his attendants to the cave of Adullam, one of those strongholds excavated in the mountains, which could be defended by a handful of men against the assault of an

REFUGE IN CAVERNS.

army. Here David was joined by his family, who were doubtless apprehensive that the vengeance of Saul would extend itself to all who were connected with one whom he mortally hated as his rival. Numbers of disaffected persons, and men involved in distress, also fled to the standard of David, so that in a short time he found himself at the head of a little army. By the advice of the prophet Gad he removed from Adullam into the land of Judah, but first he took care to place his father and mother under the protection of the king of Moab. The tender manner in which he recommended them to that prince shows the distressing state in which David then was, and his solicitude for their welfare: "Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth and be with you, till I know what GOD will do for me." 1 Sam. xxii. 3.

The good man will always be anxious for the safety of his parents, even when he is in the midst of calamity, and knows not where to turn himself for security. In the season of prosperity his concern is to render them easy and happy; and in the dark hour of adversity he studies, amidst all his personal disquietude, to alleviate their sorrows.

On entering the land of Judah, David was joined by Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, who informed him, that for the hospitality which he had received at the house of the LORD when he fled from Saul, that inhuman monster had cut off the high priest and the rest of his family. These melancholy tidings greatly affected David, who considered himself as the cause, in some measure, of the miseries which had fallen upon this venerable family. He took Abiathar to be his bosom friend, and engaged to be his security at the hazard of his own life.

While he was in exile, and endeavoring to elude the vigilance of Saul, information was brought to him that the city of Keilah was in danger of being taken by the Philistines. David was eager to assist his countrymen; but a public enterprise of this kind might expose him to the observation of his enemy, and advantages might be taken to fall upon him when engaged in battle, or in his march to Keilah. According to his wonted custom, he consulted the divine counsel, and having received a command to go, he regarded not the disapprobation of his followers, but marched instantly to the relief of his countrymen, and defeated the invaders. After so signal an act of patriotic valor, who would have expected but that the inhabitants of Keilah would have been ready to lay down their lives in his defence, or that they would have given him their city for a refuge against Saul? But these ungrateful people, when their turn was served, treacherously agreed to give up their deliverer into the hands of Saul. To ingratiate themselves with the tyrant who oppressed them, they were ready to sacrifice the man by whose generous exertions their houses had been saved from plunder, their wives and daughters from pollution, and themselves from slavery or death. From hence we may learn what an uncertain vapor is popular esteem. When the hopes of a people are fixed upon some distinguished hero, all eyes behold him with eager solicitude, and when he conquers all tongues are exerted in sounding his praises; but when that security is experienced which his exploit has procured he is forgotten, and well indeed will it be if the breath of slander does not endeavor to blast his reputation.

The malice of Saul and the treachery of the Keilahites were frustrated by that gracious Being who watched over his persecuted servant. David was warned of his danger by his heavenly conductor, and without delay hastened into the wilderness, where he wandered among the woods and mountains, closely pursued by his vengeful adversary.

In this perilous condition he was sought out by the faithful Jonathan, who, according to the energetic language of holy writ, "strengthened his hand in GOD;" or poured into his mind those consolations drawn from the verity of the divine promises, which were calculated to inspire him with religious fortitude. If it be pleasing to perceive the firmness and purity of that friendship which subsisted between these two excellent persons, it is equally pleasing and instructive to observe the piety which distinguished their conversations. Not an ostentatious or formal set of phrases in which the heart has no concern, but the warm expressions of faith, and hope, and love. The one was not more ready to pour out his complaint to his friend, than Jonathan was impatient to administer to his afflicted soul the balm of comfort, drawn, not from the vague and insufficient sources of philosophy, but from the fountain of immortal truth. He "strengthened his hand in GOD," by reminding him of the immutable verity of JEHOVAH, and the certainty of those promises which had been so graciously made to him

in times past. The piety and generosity of Jonathan will be the more admired when it is considered that those very promises which he repeated for the support of his friend, absolutely cut off himself from all prospect of succeeding to the throne of Israel. Jonathan was assured that the LORD had destined David to fill that high station, but this excited not in his mind any portion of discontent or envy, neither did it in the slightest degree abate the warmth of his friendship. On the contrary, his attachment became more zealous when David experienced most trouble; and when to all human appearance there was no chance of his escaping from the fury of Saul, then did this incomparable prince go out at the hazard of his own life, to console his friend, and "to strengthen his hand in GOD." Shall we not profit by this example?—Shall it not teach us to cast aside all self-love and every unworthy affection, when we behold our friends bowed down with affliction, and exposed to the pitiless storm of persecution?

Are we not hence instructed to forego all the obloquy with which we may be treated, in consequence of our friendship with the virtuous and righteous; and to renounce what may be conducive to our own interest rather than turn our backs upon a friend in the time of need?

The friendship of David and Jonathan is a far more beautiful and instructive picture than that of Damon and Pythias, or any other which history has recorded; yet if from it we are taught that "a true friend sticketh closer than a brother," sacrificing all regard for self-interest, all the esteem of the great and the wealthy, and all prospect of riches and aggrandizement for the sake of the object beloved, what will be our thoughts when we turn our eyes to a still more admirable instance of love than even that of Jonathan for the afflicted David? The SON of GOD laid aside princely dignity and celestial riches, to become a wretched outcast, a poor, despised, and afflicted man, that "we might be made rich." He suffered shame and ignominy, and death itself, that he might purchase redemption for captives sold under sin, and pardon for those who have rebelled against the divine Majesty of heaven and earth. Now then, "if GOD hath so loved us, how ought we to love one another?"

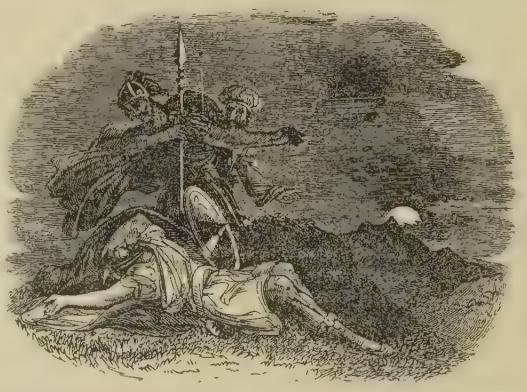
Shortly after this interview David was nearly being taken by Saul through the treachery of the Ziphites, but just as the tyrant made himself sure of his prey he was called off by a messenger with the tidings that the Philistines had taken advantage of his absence to invade the land. In a sense of this deliverance, so strikingly providential, David composed the fifty-fourth psalm, in which he pathetically represents the baseness and cruelty of his enemies, and concludes with a pious acknowledgment of GOD's mercy.

But the distresses of this eminent servant of GOD did not end here. Saul, having repulsed the Philistines, returned with eagerness to the pursuit of David, who had an opportunity of showing the superior dignity of his mind, and the uprightness of his heart, in sparing the life of his vengeful persecutor. The king of Israel, fatigued with his journey, entered a cave in the remote recesses of which David and his men were concealed. Saul was alone, and the opportunity of despatching him was such as any man who had not the fear of GOD before him would eagerly have embraced. David's men urged him to take vengeance of his enemy, and intimated to him that in so doing he would only accomplish the purpose of the LORD, who had thus delivered Saul into his hand. It required no ordinary strength of mind to resist an advantage thus providentially disposed, but David would not injure the man who sought his life, when he considered that he was his king. He cut off part of the skirt of Saul's robe as a token of what he might have accomplished if he had not been restrained by a sense of duty, and yet so tender was his conscience that even this trivial act gave him uneasiness. When Saul departed from the cave, David went out and called after him. On looking back, the king was surprised to see his son-in-law bowing himself before him in the most reverential manner, but greater was his astonishment on learning that he owed his life to the generosity of David. For the moment his heart was melted, a sense of the danger from which he had escaped deeply affected him, and he confessed that David had manifested his righteousness "in rewarding good for evil." He also expressed his belief that the kingdom would pass to David, and begged him to spare his posterity when that event should take place. What he requested was granted; and for that time they parted in peace.

After the funeral of Samuel, which it seems David attended, for "all the Israelites," it is said "were gathered together upon that occasion," he went into the wilderness

of Paran, being unwilling to trust the capricious temper of Saul. In this state of exile he began to be in want of the ordinary necessaries of life; and hearing that Nabal a man of considerable wealth, held a great feast at shearing time, he sent some of his followers to request of him a supply of provisions. This the proud rustic not only refused, but cast upon David the most opprobrious reproaches. When the report of Nabal's brutal behavior was brought to David his anger was kindled to an intemperate height, and he made a rash resolution of putting to death the unmannerly churl with all the males of his house. He had sufficient reason to resent the treatment which he had received, for he had been a protector of Nabal's property, and his followers had assisted the servants of the man on many occasions. One of these men, having more gratitude and prudence than his master, communicated what had happened to Abigail, the wife of Nabal. She saw that the rudeness of her husband was likely to produce evil consequences, and therefore, taking a peace-offering with her, went to meet David. By her persuasions and amiable demeanor the wrath of the warrior was appeased, and he desisted from his purpose. When Nabal understood the danger from which he had escaped through the judicious conduct of his wife, he was deeply dismayed, and in a short time afterward he died.

On hearing of the death of Nabal, David, on whose heart the wisdom and beauty of Abigail had made a deep impression, made her an offer of his hand, and she became his wife.



Shortly after this we find him again exercising his generosity in sparing the life of his most vengeful adversary. Though Saul had experienced the goodness of David's heart in the cave of Engedi, and for the moment felt a degree of remorse for his base behavior to a faithful subject, he soon forgot the obligation, and again pursued him with an intent of putting him to death. Once more they came near to each other, and Saul lay upon the ground with all his people fast asleep. The opportunity was inviting; all were buried in repose; and nothing was easier than to slay the king as he slept. David, accompanied by Abishai, ventured down to the camp; but though he was advised to avenge himself of his enemy, he nobly resisted the temptation, and taking with him the spear and cruise of water which were at the king's head, he retreated. When he was at a safe distance he called to Abner, Saul's general, and reproached him for not being more mindful of his master's safety. He then expostulated with the king himself in the most gentle and respectful terms on the injustice of his conduct. Saul was again confounded, and acknowledged his folly, inviting him to return, with a promise not to meditate any more evil designs against him. But David saw that such a man was not to be trusted, and therefore wisely declined the proposal. They then parted as friends to meet no more, either for peace or war. David soon after this affair obtained an asylum with Achish, king of the Philistines, with whom he was in such favor as to accompany him on an expedition against Israel. Achish reposed greater confidence in David than the Philistine lords judged to be prudent, and therefore they insisted upon his being dismissed, lest he should prove treacherous. The king was not very willing to lose so able an ally, but the united sentiments of his people compelled him to send back David and his men. David professed an ardent desire to serve Achish in this war, but it is plain enough that his inclinations were repugnant to it. He volunteered probably with a clear discernment that the Philistines would at last reject his services, for it is hardly to be supposed that the man who could twice save Saul's life would give his assistance to the invaders of his country. On his return to Ziklag, the city which had been given to him by Achish, he found that the Amalekites had set fire to it, and taken away the women and children, with all the plunder that could be carried off. This disaste

ABIGAIL.

so irritated the minds of his followers that they threatened to stone him as the cause of their misfortune. David had as much reason as any of them to be distressed, for he had lost his whole family; but instead of resenting the unkindness of his people he consulted the LORD, and having received a favorable answer, he set out in pursuit of the plunderers. The Amalekites were unprepared for an attack, as they doubtless imagined that David and his men were with the Philistines, on the borders of Israel. The victory was complete, and all the captives and spoils were recovered.

In the war which was now raging between the Philistines and the Israelites, the former were victorious; and Saul with his gallant son, the amiable and virtuous Jonathan, fell in the battle. This event occasioned a most important change in the affairs of David. It finished his persecutions, it ended his wanderings, restored him to his country, and opened to him the certainty of reigning over Israel. Yet with all these comfortable and brilliant views David rejoiced not in the death of his adversary. Instead of expressing gladness on hearing the tidings that Saul had fallen in battle, he lamented the untimely fate of the king, and that of his beloved Jonathan, in one of the most pathetic elegies that ever was written. And so highly did he regard the person of the LORD's anointed, that when an Amalekite endeavored to gain his favor by a tale, in which he took the merit of having slain Saul at the unfortunate monarch's own request, David shuddered at the relation, and ordered the murderer to be put to death For this act he has been blamed, but unjustly, for he was now possessed of the sovereign authority, as he had already been anointed by the prophet of the Most High, and consequently he had a right to act in a judicial manner.

Life for life was the plain edict of JEHOVAH, and David, who was now the minister of justice, conceived it his duty to put that law in force upon the credit of the man's own confession.

David now removed to Hebron, where he commenced his reign in the thirtieth year of his age. Thus have we brought the shepherd-lad of Bethlehem to the throne of Judah. The divine declaration was thus far fulfilled; and all the endeavors of Saul to prevent the accomplishment of it proved but so many steps to accelerate his own destruction, and the advancement of David.

At the commencement of his reign, he distinguished himself by an act of generosity which could not but endear him to the people. The inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, having rescued the remains of Saul and his son from the Philistines, interred them with great solemnity. This circumstance would have given offence to many men in David's situation, as showing too great a partiality to one who was known to have been his enemy. But he was superior to such jealousy; and so far from censuring the men of Jabesh-Gilead for the respect shown by them to the bones of their deceased sovereign, he commended them, and promised to requite their kindness.

David was now exalted to a throne, but he was not yet to experience a tranquil seat. The tribes of Israel, at the instigation of Abner, chose Ishbosheth, Saul's son, for their king, in consequence of which a civil war broke out between Israel and Judah. This war continued for a long time, and much blood was spilt; but as the counsels of Heaven could not be frustrated, which had given the kingdom to the son of Jesse, "he waxed stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker." 2 Sam. iii. 1.

At length a sudden quarrel between Ishbosheth and his general terminated the war, and reduced the whole kingdom to the sceptre of David. Abner had taken the concubine of Saul, which gave great offence to Isnbosheth, who thought it an act of presumption in one who was but a subject. Abner conceived himself injured by the reproaches of a monarch who was indebted to him for the tottering crown which he wore, and in a fit of resentment he offered to transfer that crown to David. A negotiation took place; but while it was going on, Joab and Abishai, two brothers, and men of great power in the court of David, slew the Israelitish general treacherously. David was struck with horror at the atrocious deed, but his authority was too weak, and their influence too strong, to permit him to punish the murderers with safety to himself. "I am this day weak," says he, "though anointed king; and these men be too hard for me; the LORD shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness." 2 Sam. iii. 39.

Another circumstance happened at the same time, which gives us but an unfavorable opinion of the manners and principles of that period, though it affords us another occasion of admiring the magnanimity of David.

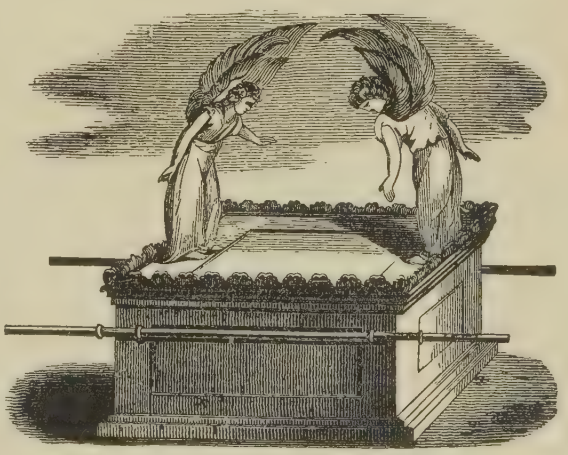
DEATH OF SAUL. — Page 242.

When intelligence came of the death of Abner, all the court of Ishbosheth, as well as the feeble monarch himself, conceived that his reign could not continue long. To ingratiate themselves therefore with David, two of the servants of Ishbosheth murdered him in his bed, and carried his head to the king of Judah at Hebron, flattering themselves no doubt with receiving high applause, and rewards for their zeal. But the treachery of the wretches roused the indignation of David, and he instantly commanded them to be put to death.

The tribes of Israel, in a solemn assembly, now acknowledged David for their king, and he was accordingly anointed at Hebron in the year of the world 2956, just seven years and a half from the death of Saul. Shortly after his accession David invaded the country of the Jebusites, and took from them Jerusalem, which he made the seat of his government; and that famous part of it, called the Hill of Zion, was for a long time distinguished by the appellation of the City of David. Here he built a magnificent palace, the materials of which, as well as the workmen, were brought from Tyre, whose inhabitants were celebrated for their skill in architecture throughout the East.

The Philistines were no sooner informed of the advancement of David to the throne of Israel, than they began to fear that his warlike spirit would lead him to attempt the conquest of their country. They had fully witnessed his enterprising genius, and they knew that he was intimately acquainted with all the strong-holds in and near their territory. But David entertained no hostile designs against them, nor does his character warrant us to suppose that he would have turned his arms, unprovoked, against a people who had afforded him an asylum in the day of his distress. The Philistines, however, took no steps to establish peace and union between the two countries, but, prompted by fear and envy, determined to crush the rising kingdom in its bud. They imagined that as David was but just inaugurated, it would be no difficult matter to dismember his dominions. With this view they began hostilities; but though David was not prepared for the attack, he lost no time in collecting his forces, and quickly repelled the invaders of his country, who, in their hasty retreat, left their gods behind, which the pious king consumed with fire. The Philistines again made their appearance in great numbers, but were as unsuccessful as at first. David had then a resting time, which he employed in attending to the interests of religion. In the latter years of Saul's reign little regard had been paid to the services of the sanctuary; for when a prince apostatizes from his God, it can hardly be expected that there will be much religion among his subjects.

When David had obtained rest from his enemies, his first care was to bring up the ark of God, which had long lain neglected at Kirjath-Jearim, to Jerusalem in a solemn procession, and to recommend by his example a devout reverence for divine worship. But in this ceremony an awful circumstance occurred, which occasioned the ark to be deposited in the house of Obed-Edom for three months. A man of the name of Uzzah, seemingly without any ill design, observing that the ark was in danger of falling, put forth his hand to support it. For this he was instantly struck dead,



ARK OF THE TABERNACLE.

and the judgment had such an effect upon David, that he was afraid at that time to take it any further. The error of Uzzah may appear too small to have deserved so severe a punishment; but let us remember that the visitation was of the Lord, who judgeth righteously. By his law none were to meddle with holy things but those

MOUNT ZION. From a Drawing by F. Arundale, Esq.

who were consecrated thereto. The ark was deemed the most sacred of these, as containing the mercy-seat, and bearing the Shechinah, or the visible symbol of the divine presence. David acted wrong in placing the holy vessel upon a cart instead of employing the Levites to bear it on their shoulders; the judgment upon Uzzah, therefore, was intended to convince the king of his error, and likewise to impress on the minds of the people a becoming dread of the infinite holiness and justice of JEHOVAH. The pious reverence paid to the sacred deposite by Obed-Edom brought upon him the blessing of Heaven so remarkably, that David was informed of it, on which he resumed his design, and fetched the ark up to Jerusalem with great rejoicings. On this occasion he composed some beautiful psalms of thanksgiving, which were sung by the people, and were afterwards incorporated into the liturgy of the Jewish church. The pious care of David for the honor of GOD's house and service did not end with this solemn festival; but he took pains to correct the abuses, to restore the beauty of divine worship, and to excite the people by his own example to a constant attendance upon holy ordinances. Nor was he content with the discharge of his public duty, or with exhibiting the appearance of religion in the presence of his subjects. He had a regard also to the religious principles and deportment of his family. When he had seen the ark of GOD duly situated, and had taken care that divine service should be regularly performed, he returned to bless his house, or to discharge his duty as the head of a family, by praying with them and communicating to them religious instruction. Nor did the piety of David end here. He knew that religion must have its seat in the heart, and that it must be cultivated by private meditation and prayer. Most of his psalms are the pious breathings of a soul retired from the noise of the world, from public cares and concerns, to enjoy communion with its GOD in secret. David was filled with ardent zeal for the divine glory, and in a spirit of gratitude to GOD for the blessings he had experienced, and with a deep concern for the edification of his subjects, he projected the design of building a superb temple for divine worship in the capital of his dominions. The prophet Nathan at first approved of the design, but he soon received instructions from the LORD to forbid its execution; because David was called to other services, and that this great work was reserved for his son. The most gracious declaration was made to him, that his throne should be established for ever; which promise, as it follows a glorious description of the exalted personage that should arise from him, must allude to the MESSIAH, "of whose kingdom there shall be no end." David received the divine message with joy and gratitude. Though crossed in his favorite plan, he complained not, but submitted to the will of GOD, and poured out the grateful effusions of his heart in a song of thanksgiving.

The piety of David, his love of meditation, and his punctuality in attending upon the services of the sanctuary, did not lessen his courage as a soldier, or make him indolent as a king. He conducted his army in person against various potent enemies, and gained the most important victories. Many of the neighboring nations were brought under tribute, and others were glad to form an alliance with Israel. The royal treasury was enriched, the nation was in the most flourishing condition, and the name of David was spread through distant lands. All that he undertook prospered, "for the LORD preserved him whithersoever he went." Thus in his person and government was fulfilled the divine promise made to Abraham, "unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates." Gen. xv. 18.

In the administration of his government, David showed a strict impartiality, and exerted himself with diligence, not leaving the management of affairs to mercenary hirelings, but taking the examination of them into his own hands, "executing judgment and justice equally unto all his people."

We have had several occasions to admire the generosity of this great man to his bitterest enemy Saul, and the warmth of his friendship for Jonathan the son of that monarch. That spirit did not expire when he gained the crown, but on the contrary he showed considerable kindness to the family of his predecessor. His regard for Jonathan still remained, and having discovered that he had left a son behind him, David gave him the whole family estate, and admitted him constantly to his table.

It is chiefly in such instances of grateful affection, of friendly benevolence as this, that we trace with admiration true greatness of soul. All the remembrance of injuries received from Saul was buried in his grave, and David's study was to soften the sorrows of his descendants, and to extend the love which he bore for Jonathan to his chil-

dren. Here David appears with lustre, and on this part of his character we could wish to dwell at considerable length; but painful necessity urges us forward to a scene, that fills the mind with astonishment and horror. The remark has already been made, that the sacred historians never attempt to palliate, much less to suppress the evil actions of the persons whose lives they record. David is a favorite character, and justly, in the book of God, but he is not represented as faultless; on the contrary, we are now come to an event in his story which exhibits an humbling proof of the frailty and depravity of the best of men. Having established his throne in security, David seems to have relaxed in his zeal, for he continued at Jerusalem indulging himself at his ease while his country was engaged in a war with the Ammonites. The season of soft indulgence is the season of temptation, and that wherein the enemy of souls is the most successful. David had been reposing on his bed in the daytime, and at "eventide he arose" to enjoy the cool breeze upon the top of his house. In the East the roofs of the houses are flat, that the inhabitants may conveniently walk thereon. As David was thus refreshing himself with the evening air, he saw a lovely woman bathing herself. Instead of averting his eyes from so dangerous and fascinating an object, he suffered the poison of temptation to enter without resistance, and presently became the slave of a lawless passion. On inquiry, the woman was found to be the wife of one of his most faithful subjects, who was then abroad in his service. This intelligence did not damp the evil desires of David, or produce in his mind any degree of serious reflection. The reins were thrown loose upon his corrupt passions, and having sent for Bathsheba to the palace, the abominable crime of adultery was perpetrated. We shudder at the atrocious offence of a man whose conduct hitherto has been so amiable and praiseworthy; but there is this striking lesson to be learned from it, that temptation, to be overcome, must be resisted in the first instance. If the eye is indulged in feasting upon an unlawful object, if the ear is permitted to imbibe the luscious tale, or the imagination to rove upon wanton scenes, the heart will soon be corrupted, the best principles will be overwhelmed, and conscience will be stifled till she revives only to punish the mind with the heavy scourge of remorse.

HOUSE-TOP.

When it appeared that Bathsheba was with child, David began to entertain fears but they were not the effects of compunction and remorse. He was not yet convinced of his sinful conduct, nor apprehensive of the divine displeasure. He only feared that a discovery of his guilt would lessen his reputation in the eyes of the people, and perhaps occasion a revolt in the army. Guilty passion is mean and pitiful; and will stoop to the basest arts to hide itself from public observation. That which occasions joy to others, gives pain to the adulterer. He feels no delight in being a father, he has no parental feelings, none of those pleasing expectations which swell the heart of an affectionate husband. On the contrary, his mind is filled with black and terrible images. He dreads the hour when a living witness of his enormity shall appear; he looks upon the person who has been involved in guilt by his treachery, with a kind of disgust, and it is well if some dark and bloody designs are not formed and hatched in his brain.

The king of Israel, when he found that Bathsheba had conceived, sent for her husband home on a frivolous errand, that the child might pass upon him as his own. With this view he entertained Uriah sumptuously, and having plied him well with wine, sent him home to his house. The scheme was artful, but base. Providence, that watched all the movements of it, crossed the whole by preventing Uriah from visiting his wife. Had the man been sober, perhaps he would not have entertained an opinion so preposterous and romantic as that it did not become him to enjoy the comforts of

MODERN EGYPTIAN HOUSE OF THE FIRST CLASS. Viewed from the Garden.

MODERN EGYPTIAN HOUSE OF THE FIRST CLASS.

his habitation while the rest of the army were exposed in the field. The project of David, therefore, destroyed the very purpose which it was intended to produce. Uriah, heated with liquor, lay down at the door of the palace and fell asleep. This disappointment irritated the guilty mind of David, and not knowing what other expedient to adopt, he resolved upon getting rid of his rival at once. Adultery and murder are often connected crimes. The one very naturally introduces the other, as the only means left to conceal a shameful fact, and to preserve an abominable intercourse. Uriah was sent back with a letter to Joab, general of the army. The poor man little suspected that it was the mandate of death. It commanded Joab to place Uriah in the very front of the battle, so that his fall might be inevitable. The consequence was natural. Joab himself had been an assassin, and he was not scrupulous in obeying the injunction of his sovereign, which would prove so admirable a cloak for himself.

When David received the information that Uriah was dead, he publicly took Bathsheba to be his wife, and for a time he was wholly insensible of his heinous transgression. But though the sinner may rest secure for a time, though he may indulge his criminal passion without any painful sensation, and be wholly regardless of the consequences, the time must come when "judgment will have her perfect work;" conscience will at length arise, and her voice will be heard.

Nathan, the messenger of GOD, is sent to the degenerate monarch with a declaration of the divine displeasure, and the denunciation of judgment. The prophet, fearful, perhaps, that a direct reproof might provoke the wrath of David, and only serve to harden him in his wickedness, began to engage his attention by the relation of an inhuman action committed by one of his rich subjects against a poor neighbor. The circumstance was so base, and told in so affecting a manner, that the king, in his zeal for justice, immediately declared that the offender should be put to death if he could be found. This was the precise point for applying the parable. "Thou art the man," says the prophet, and then proceeds to set before the royal culprit his base ingratitude to GOD, in this complicated mass of iniquity. The monarch felt the force of the charge. The arrows of conviction entered into his soul, and he made this penitent confession: "I have sinned against the LORD."

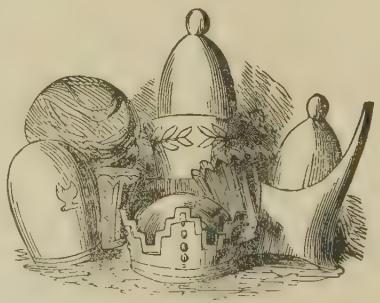
The repentance of David was genuine, and he poured out the keen agony which rent his heart in the fifty-first psalm, which is perhaps the most exquisite picture of an humbled sinner to be found in the sacred volume.

When he was thus brought to a deep sense of his transgression, a word of comfort was administered unto him. "The LORD hath put away thy sin," says Nathan; "thou shalt not die." David's sin was cancelled through his repentance, by the grace of GOD; but it was remembered against him, and for a punishment, the fruit of this adulterous commerce was cut off.

If the fall of David teaches us the necessity of a most watchful circumspection over our hearts, and of keeping a strict guard upon our senses; if it convinces us that the best of men are sinners, and liable to fall into the grossest corruptions; and if it cautions us against the first approaches of temptation, lest it bring us to the commission of the vilest offences—his repentance is equally instructive and encouraging. We have here an instance of the exceeding goodness of GOD in accepting the contrition of his servant, and in restoring to him, notwithstanding his aggravated guilt, "the joy of his salvation."

From this instance sinners are encouraged to hope for the pardon of their offences, however manifold and heinous soever they may be; but it must be thoroughly sought for by deep contrition of heart, by sincere confession, and by fervent prayer.

The war in which David was engaged, at the time when he sinned so shamefully, terminated successfully. The Ammonites were subdued, Rabbah their capital city was taken, and the crown of their monarch placed on the head of the conqueror. After this important conquest he caused the inhabitants to be put "under saws,



EGYPTIAN AND PERSIAN CROWNS.

and under harrows of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln." 2 Sam. xii. 31. For this conduct David has been stigmatized as a cruel tyrant and a vengeful monster. But there was nothing inhuman or ungenerous in a practice which was common at that period. We are not to conclude that the conqueror put the Ammonites to death or torture, but only that he made them pass under these implements of labor as a mark of subjection. It was no more degrading than the custom which prevailed among the polished Romans of leading vanquished kings and their families in chains to grace the triumph of some distinguished hero.

The sin of David was soon punished, and that in a most remarkable manner.

His son Amnon, a most abandoned and unprincipled profligate, committed incest with his sister Tamar, and then basely and inhumanly turned her out of his house. This shocking act was avenged by Absalom, another of David's sons, who at an entertainment which he gave to his brethren caused Amnon to be murdered when he was overcome with liquor. Thus the crimes of David, with all the aggravating circumstances of them, were punished in his own family in a manner exactly parallel.

Absalom, fearing that this foul piece of treachery might cost him his life, fled for protection to the king of Geshur, with whom he resided three years. At the expiration of that time, David's grief for Amnon being abated, his love for Absalom returned, and he was easily persuaded to recall him. The only punishment which he indicted upon the fratricide was to banish him from his presence for two years; but this fond partiality for that profligate young man proved a sore trial to David.

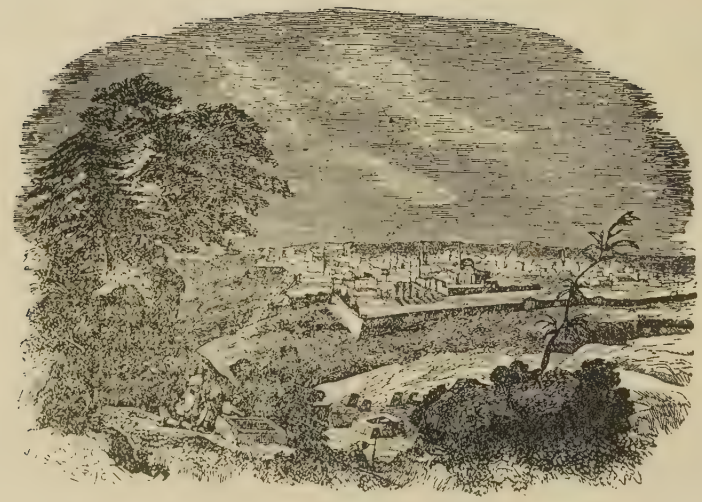
The personal beauty and accomplishments of Absalom appear to have been the only grounds for his father's affection.

He was treacherous, vindictive, and ambitious. Instead of repaying his father's goodness by amendment and humility, he insinuated himself into the good opinion of the people by a pretended concern for their interests, and having thus alienated them from their duty, he commenced open rebellion. The conspiracy was so formidable that David was under the necessity of escaping from Jerusalem with a few faithful friends.

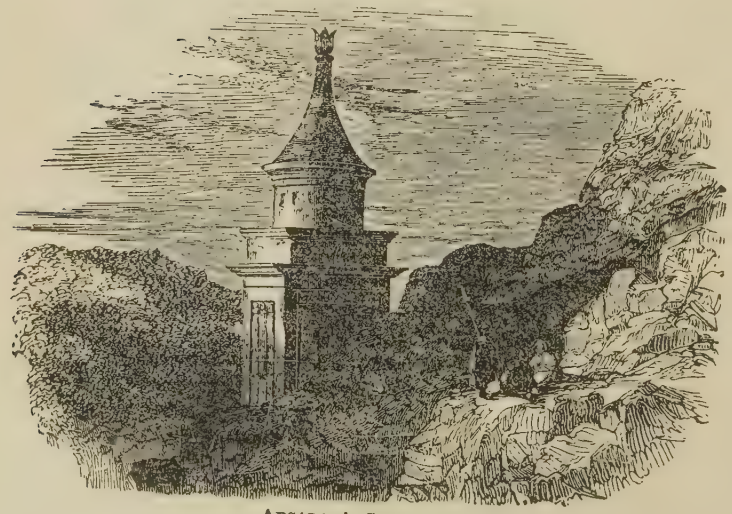
David, not being willing to expose the ark of God to danger and to irreverent treatment, commanded the priests to return with it to Jerusalem, for, says he, "if I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it, and his habitation: but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I; let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26.

Through the whole of this severe affliction he maintained a submissive, pious, and forgiving spirit. He saw that the hand of God was now displayed in correcting him for his transgressions, and he endured the rod without murmuring. As he fled, Shimei, a descendant of Saul, took the mean advantage of his forlorn condition to use him with the most brutal insolence, casting stones at him and uttering the most frantic and diabolical execrations. Some of David's servants were eager to punish the daring impudence of the man, but their zeal was thus restrained by the meek and penitent monarch: "Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him: it may be that the Lord will look upon mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day."

Absalom was not content with possessing himself of the royal city, and driving his aged father into exile, but committed a most abominable act in defiling his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. A wretch who could debase himself so far as this, was not to be restrained from the perpetration of the most heinous of all offences. Rebellion and incest were but natural steps to parricide; and Absalom pursued his father with a determined resolution of taking away his life. A battle ensued between the royal army and the rebels, in which the latter were defeated, and Absalom fled. The kindness of David to his graceless son continued to the very last. He gave express orders to his soldiers "that they should deal gently with Absalom," and when he heard of his death, he mourned for him with a grief which may be justly considered as excessive. The pathetic expressions he poured out on this occasion show the deep agony which he experienced; and though they cannot be wholly vindicated, yet they exhibit the most favorable picture of a good and benevolent heart. "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom!" he exclaimed; "would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" The horrible ingratitude of this graceless young man was forgotten, all his wickedness was passed over, and David considered not the rebel, but the son. The tenderness of his grief may also have had this to excuse it, that the father was concerned at the untimeliness of his son's fate, and at his being cut off in the midst of



THE PRESENT CITY OF JERUSALEM.



ABSALOM'S SEPULCHRE.

his sins without an opportunity of repentance. Let this awful example be a warning both to parents and children: to the former, not by a foolish partiality and indulgence to encourage them in vicious habits and connexions, and to the latter, in making them repress every inordinate desire and ambitious principle, and in making them sensible that the want of duty to their parents is the sure way of bringing down upon them the vengeance of GOD.

The people, who had shown their loyalty to David, in opposing and quelling this dangerous rebellion, were greatly dissatisfied with his uncommon concern at the loss of a worthless son, and at his keeping himself retired from the administration of public affairs. Joab freely told the king of the danger that might result from this conduct, in weaning the affections of his subjects from his person and government. This remonstrance had its effect, and David returned to the discharge of his public duty, and to the favor of his people. On his passage over Jordan to Jerusalem, in triumph, Shimei, the cowardly and insolent Benjamite, who had shown such a malignancy to the exiled king, now came with much servility, and supplicated his forgiveness. David was strongly pressed by some of his attendants to punish the man, but with that magnanimity which usually distinguished his conduct, he passed over the insolence that had been offered him, and declared that no blood should be shed in that day of general rejoicing.

ANCIENT ROWING GALLEY.

Shortly after this, another insurrection was raised against him by the artifices of a factious Israelite called Sheba, but though it portended more alarming consequences than that of Absalom, yet by the zealous loyalty of the men of Judah this rebellion was quelled, and the misguided Israelites returned to their duty. Civil dissensions frequently produce want and misery. When men's minds are alienated from the government under which they live, and feuds and contentions arise, industry slackens, the regular course of business is broken, and the earth itself is cursed through the pride and wickedness of man. Two rebellions had disturbed the peace of David's government, and the perverseness of his subjects was punished by a grievous famine. The sacred history does, indeed, represent this visitation of Providence as the consequence of Saul's breach of faith to the poor and oppressed Gibeonites. This will not, however, be found to invalidate the assertion that the civil wars were leading causes of this natural evil. They were parts of the same chain, ordered by Heaven for the punishment of a rebellious nation. When David inquired of the LORD concerning the cause of the famine which desolated his kingdoms, he was told that the crime of Saul remained unexpiated, and the sacrifice appointed consisted of seven of that monarch's descendants. These persons accordingly were delivered to the Gibeonites and executed. This is one of those mysterious transactions on which much conjecture might be spent without any satisfactory conclusion being formed. Upon principles of human policy it would be condemned, but we are now contemplating a procedure out of the way of man's judgment, and necessarily involved in clouds and thick darkness. The ALMIGHTY can neither do nor command that which is wrong, and if we are to believe that he ordered this atonement to be made, that an offence might be removed from Israel, we must conclude that the measure was wise and good. And that the offering was made in consequence of GOD's command, cannot well be doubted, when we consider the unparalleled generosity of David to Saul and his posterity. We have already had frequent occasions to admire his forgiving spirit, and his great liberality to the family of his persecutor; it cannot, therefore, be supposed that at such a distance of time David would have acted in this instance from any other motive than a pure submission to the will of GOD clearly revealed to him.

The latter years of this truly great king were exceedingly prosperous. He saw

TRIUMPH OF DAVID.

faction and discontent expire within his territories, foreign enemies subdued, many powerful nations become tributary to him, and others courting his alliance.

But prosperity is oftentimes as dangerous to the virtue and peace of nations as to individuals. David, like many other eminent men, shines with more lustre in the cloudy and tempestuous season of adversity, than in the full blaze of ease and worldly glory.

When he found that his dominions were established in security, and that his enemies were vanquished on every side, a principle of vanity seems to have prompted him to number his people. The measure itself does not carry any appearance of impropriety, but the ALMIGHTY Searcher of hearts judges by the motives, and not by the actions which result from them. The conduct of David was evidently wrong, and it appeared so, even to the ungodly Joab, who remonstrated against it; but the king was obstinate, and the people were numbered throughout the land. The guilt of the monarch was punished by a devouring pestilence, which threatened to extirpate the whole nation; but his penitence was accepted, and the progress of the destroying angel was stopped. On the very spot where the plague was stayed, David offered a solemn sacrifice, and there did his successor erect a magnificent temple to the glory of the GOD of Israel. When we read of these awful judgments falling upon a whole people for the wickedness of their rulers, we are apt to wonder, and some perhaps will be disposed to murmur at the rectitude of the proceeding, or to disbelieve the fact as it is related. But if we look to the history of modern nations, though the writers may have omitted to notice the agency of Providence in the events recorded by them, we shall often see evident proofs of this great truth, that public and crying enormities produce evils of the most destructive kind. The sin of David in numbering his people is stated as the cause of the pestilence, but it is not, therefore, to be inferred that the people themselves were innocent. Though his crime only is mentioned, we may justly conclude that the cup of national iniquity was so full as to call for a heavy punishment. It is not uncommon in Scripture to represent the judgment which falls upon a guilty nation, as an act of justice inflicted upon it for the offence of their rulers.

At the close of his life, David was much afflicted with bodily disease, and from the symptoms recorded, it has been conjectured that he was stricken with a dead palsy. He, therefore, wisely took care to settle the succession of his crown, fearing that by leaving this material point undetermined, the most serious evils might result from the rivalship of his sons. The necessity of this measure soon appeared, for Adonijah, the brother of Absalom, and much like him both in person and disposition, being impatient to regain the throne, collected his partisans and declared himself king. When David was informed of this rebellious conduct of Adonijah, he caused Solomon to be proclaimed, and he was accepted by the people with such universal acclamations of joy, that his opponent yielded up his pretensions, and submitted himself to his brother.

Perceiving his end to be drawing near, David called for his son, and gave him a strict charge respecting the building of the temple, on which his heart had been set for many years. The work was great, but the good old king encouraged Solomon to persevere in it, by an assurance that the divine blessing would prosper his labors. This charge was delivered in the presence of the princes of Israel, whom he exhorted to assist in this good work, and the influence of his example and solicitations so far prevailed that their contributions exceeded David's most sanguine expectations.

It was a solemn and an affecting scene. All were anxious to express their gratitude to GOD and their veneration for his aged servant. The king himself was invigorated, and his soul was filled with the divine Spirit. He proclaimed the praises of his GOD, and he predicted an effusion of blessings to his son. He called upon the whole congregation to join in an act of worship, and in the midst of this joy and festivity, Solomon was crowned the second time.

This was the concluding scene of David's life, and it was such a one as became a man of his exalted rank and piety. He had no uneasiness at leaving a flourishing kingdom, and wealth and dignity, but carefully prepared for his entrance into the invisible world, by disencumbering himself of all that belonged to this corrupt and perishable state. He resigned his throne with becoming ease and cheerfulness. It gave him satisfaction to invest his son with the royal robes, and to see him received with the

PROCLAMATION OF SOLOMON.

universal approbation and joy of the kingdom. In thus laying down the diadem before death could wrest it from him, we have cause to admire his truly heroic mind. But that which raised David above the bawbles of the world, and animated him in the sight of death, was the firm conviction of his interest in JEHOVAH, the covenant GOD of his salvation. "Although," says he, "my house be not so with GOD, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. The MESSIAH was all his hope, and all the ground upon which he built his expectation of redemption, though he was sensible that the advent of that glorious personage was yet at a remote distance.

This faith supported David in all the troubles of his life; it strengthened him in his sickness, and it enabled him at last to meet death without terror. What can be more triumphant than this beautiful declaration: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me?" Ps. xxiii. 4.

He died at the age of seventy years, forty of which he reigned over Israel.

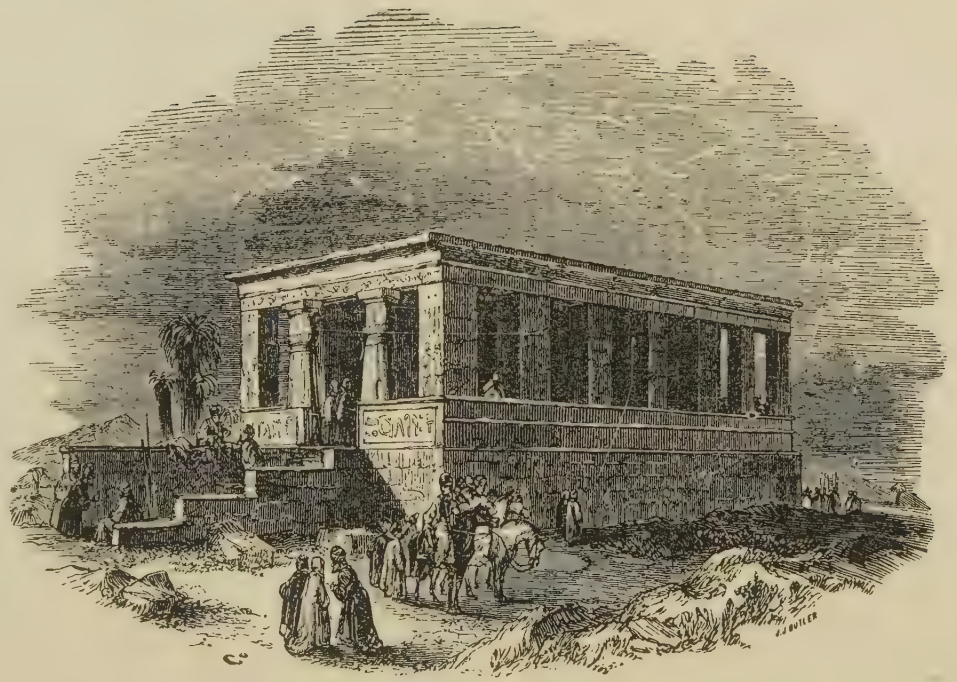
In David's character we behold a mixture of excellences and defects, great virtues and lamentable failings. But though his infirmities were many, and his offences very enormous, yet we see him returning to his GOD with deep contrition of heart, and with sincere confession of his guilt. If then in his fall we have a warning set before us, in his repentance and amendment we behold an example which it will be well for us to imitate. We may not indeed be sinners exactly in the same way as David was, but sinners we are, and there is no other method of gaining the divine favor but by the means which this royal penitent obtained it, namely, by genuine humiliation of soul, and faith in the merits of the REDEEMER.

He had a very clear view of that divine Person who, "according to the flesh," was to descend from him, and in various psalms he celebrates his dignity, incarnation, voluntary humility, sufferings, resurrection, and ascension. Those sublime compositions are full of the MESSIAH, and of his work of redemption; and unless they are considered with this reference, they are, at least in many parts, confused, obscure, and perplexing. Even those which have a plain relation to the circumstances of David are not to be confined to them only, but have a farther and more important illustration in the life and death of the REDEEMER. The book of Psalms is an exhibition of the great scheme of salvation throughout, and if the reader will only enter into the evangelical sense of them, his edification and comfort will be greater than any words of mine can express.

But David was not only a prophet who foretold, under various striking characters and images, the coming of the Sun of righteousness; but he was himself, in many leading points, an illustrious type of that blessed object. In all respects, as a shepherd, prophet, priest, warrior, king, and mediator, we can trace the lines of perfect resemblance. David conquered Goliath, the enemy of Israel, when the hearts of all men failed for fear; thus did our spiritual David, when even the armies of Heaven shunned the contest, encounter the adversaries of our salvation, endure the wrath of divine justice, and bring in complete deliverance for us. The great enemy of mankind, possessed of gigantic faculties, and armed at all points, threatened us with certain destruction; but JESUS, who was "made lower than the angels," divested himself of all his celestial glories, "emptied himself and became of no reputation;" and in our nature, met and vanquished the arrogant champion, by inflicting on him a mortal wound in the head, agreeably to the express words of the first prophecy on record.

It would be an easy and a profitable employ to pursue the parallel between David and the MESSIAH farther, by tracing the shepherd youth on through all the marvellous incidents of his life, amidst storms and persecutions, to the throne, and in connexion therewith to mark the humiliation, sufferings, and exaltation of the "king of Zion," till his church shall be established in perfect glory.

But the limits of this volume will not allow me to perform what it would be a pleasure to execute. The reader, however, can easily mark the resemblance himself, especially if he will take as his companion and his counsellor, that inestimable work, Bishop Horne's "Commentary on the Psalms;" a book which no family, nor any pious Christian, ought to be without.



Egyptian Temple.

SOLOMON. — Page 257.

SOLOMON.

BORN IN THE YEAR OF THE WORLD, 2971; DIED, 3029.

ALL Scripture history debases the pride of human glory, and exhibits, in each character we contemplate, sufficient cause for the deepest humiliation. The person whose life comes next in order, represents our nature at one time in a state of the highest advancement, and at another, reduced to extreme infamy. Here we behold a man who was raised above the level of his species, not only by his rank, but by the excellence of his understanding, who yet degenerated to a degree of folly and wickedness, which, in such an instance, we should have supposed impossible. Where, except in our first parents, have we met with a similar example; the most eminent wisdom disgraced by the basest apostacy?

It is indeed a mortifying reflection, that wisdom and holiness do not always meet in the same person. Men whose intellectual qualifications were of the first magnitude, stand exposed to perpetual reproach for weaknesses and vices which would disgrace the rude and uncivilized inhabitant of the forest, unacquainted alike with the precepts of revelation and the rules of social life. This establishes beyond a question the certainty of man's being in a degenerate state, fallen from original righteousness, and incapable by the exertion of his own powers of attaining any knowledge of GOD.

Human wisdom deserves all praise and encouragement; but unless it is sanctified by grace, and rendered subservient to the promotion of GOD's glory, and the renewal of the heart, it is most likely to prove a curse instead of a blessing. If the mental talent is not thus improved, a severe judgment will be passed upon the man who has abused it, since he cannot urge any plea of ignorance for his excuse in "not having fulfilled the commandments of his LORD."

In the life of Solomon, king of Israel, we see all that human wisdom can possibly do towards enriching the mind, or sanctifying the heart. In him it will appear that the most vigorous intellect is incapable of resisting temptation, and that the greatest extent of knowledge will not cleanse that moral corruption, or clear away that spiritual darkness, which debase the soul of every man born into the world.

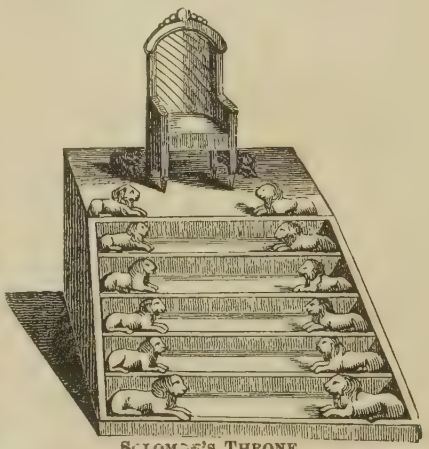
This celebrated monarch was the son of that Bathsheba whose charms allured David to commit the foulest actions of his life. He was born in the year of the world 2971, and the expectation of his father concerning him was strongly raised by this prediction: "Behold a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build a house for my name, and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever." 1 Chron. xxii. 9, 10.

Though this prophecy was literally fulfilled in the person and reign of Solomon, yet it is manifest to us that "a greater than Solomon is here." The declaration had a plain reference to the son and successor of David, but it is only verified completely in the

person and reign of the Prince of Peace, who gives spiritual and eternal rest unto his people, who is the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth, and who is now perfecting that glorious edifice, the church of God, of which he is himself the chief corner-stone. On the birth of Solomon, Nathan the prophet was sent to David to inform him that the divine favor rested upon his son, who also received the distinguished appellation of Jedidiah, "or beloved of the LORD." 2 Sam. xii. 25.

Concerning his infant years and education we know nothing; but it can hardly be supposed that the child of so much promise was neglected by such a man as David. We have, indeed, seen much to condemn in that great man's conduct to his other children, particularly to Absalom; but from Solomon's early piety and prudence it is to be presumed that he profited much by his father's instructions.

When David saw that his dissolution drew near, and that a conspiracy was formed to place his son Adonijah on the throne, he caused Solomon to be invested with the royal robes, and resigned to him the sceptre in the sight of all Israel.



SOLOMON'S THRONE.

Several persons were put to death at the beginning of his reign, but there appears more of stern necessity than severity in these executions. Solomon acted by the counsel of his dying father in cutting off those men whose crimes had long merited punishment, and of whose fidelity he could have no security. In the administration of justice upon these traitors and murderers, he also gratified the inclinations of his people, and established the peace of his kingdom.

The early part of his reign was uncommonly brilliant. "The LORD magnified him exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been before him on any king in Israel;" (1 Chron. xxix. 25;) and the ground of this eminent favor was, "that he loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father." 1 Kings iii. 3.

Shortly after his accession he held a solemn festival before the tabernacle of Moses at Gibeon. There, in the presence of all the elders of Israel, the young king paid his devotions to the Most High; and so acceptable was this service, that the same night a voice from heaven promised him whatever he should desire. The magnitude of the offer did not beget any improper desires in the mind of Solomon. He had no wish for enlarged dominions, extensive conquests, great riches, or for a long life of glory and pleasure. To a young and active monarch, some such objects would have been the most desirable; and even young persons in a far inferior station would, on such a proposal, immediately have fixed their wishes upon wealth, renown, or pleasure. But Solomon had a higher ambition, and was only desirous of being truly a great king, by doing good to his subjects, and by being able to administer judgment to them with an equal hand. "Give me now," says he, "wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?" 2 Chron. i. 10. The petition of Solomon cannot be too seriously weighed and admired. He rightly judged, that in praying for such a degree of wisdom and knowledge as was necessary to the better government of his people, he was not only supplicating a blessing for himself, but for them. The nature of that wisdom which he desired is also worthy our particular notice. It was not a depth of scientific knowledge, a minute acquaintance with the hidden powers

JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON.

of nature, a thorough understanding of all the properties of matter and of mind, or a profound skill in tongues, for which he prayed, but for that wisdom which would enable him to discharge the duties of his station for the glory of God and the general good. And this should be the aim of every man, let his rank in life or his pursuits be what they may. All knowledge that is not calculated to promote the divine honor, and the benefit of our fellow-creatures, if not injurious, is at least useless. A man may possess a very accurate acquaintance with books and with the sciences, he may have his head filled with the lumber of learning, and know all the events of history, yet with all this reputation of wisdom he may be a fool, because what he possesses is not applied to a single useful purpose. Let the conduct then of Solomon be a lesson of imitation to young persons, to study nothing without having a beneficial object in view; and let all their desires, prayers, and pursuits, be directed to this end, "how they shall best serve God in their generation."

The choice of Solomon met with the divine approbation, and his wish was not only gratified, but to the promise of the most extensive wisdom was added that of riches, honor, and length of days. No man ever lost by asking for divine instruction. The submission of our will and reason to the counsel of God is honoring him in the fullest sense, and we are assured that "those who honor him he will honor." Solomon asked only for the influence of the divine Spirit to instruct him in the arduous employment of governing a mighty nation; and as his request resulted from a pure wish to serve God and to do good, he received, in addition to his prayer, blessings which, if he had supplicated, would not perhaps have been granted him.

When this great solemnity at Gibeon was ended, Solomon returned to Jerusalem, where he also publicly officiated in the great services of religion, a practice which could not but tend to produce the most beneficial effects upon the people.

The pre-eminent wisdom of the young monarch soon became celebrated, and one remarkable circumstance occurred which displayed his quick discernment and profound judgment in the strongest light. Two women who lived together were each delivered of a son, but in the night one of the infants died, on which the mother took the corpse and laid it beside the other woman as she slept, taking away the living child in its stead. This occasioned a violent contest between the women, and the matter was laid before the king, in whose presence each maintained her right to the living child. As there were no evidences to support the claim of either, the king ordered that the child should be divided between them. This dreadful sentence so operated upon the feelings of the real mother, that she readily relinquished her pretensions in favor of her rival rather than witness the slaughter of her child. By this artifice Solomon discovered that she was the mother, and instantly caused the child to be delivered unto her. Justly therefore was the fame of his wisdom spread among the nations, and happy were the people that had such a prince to rule over them. He was not only careful to administer justice faithfully and indiscriminately, as well to the poor as to the rich, but he studied to preserve his dominions in peace, and by his care and wisdom "silver and gold became as plenteous at Jerusalem as stones, and cedar-trees as the sycamore-trees that are in the vale for abundance." 2 Chron. i. 15.

By an attention to commerce he greatly enriched his subjects, and acquired powerful allies. The principal of these was Hiram, king of Tyre, a prince who possessed a most noble and liberal mind: for instead of entertaining any jealousy of Solomon's rising greatness, he assisted him in his views, and permitted the Tyrians, then the most famous shipwrights and mariners in the world, to build him ships and to navigate them. The king of Israel, being determined to fulfil his father's last solemn injunctions, of building a magnificent temple to the glory of God, communicated his intentions to the king of Tyre, requesting that he would provide him a person qualified to superintend the work,

Ruins of Tyre.

Ancient Egyptian and Roman Ships.

RUINS ON THE COAST OF TYRE.

together with proper laborers, and such materials as were necessary. Hiram complied with the wish of his neighbor; and this structure, which never had a parallel, was prosecuted with eagerness, and consecrated in the most solemn manner. On that great festival Solomon appeared with distinguished glory, as the conductor of his people's devotions; and the prayer which he pronounced at the dedication of the temple is an inimitable composition, being fervent, pathetic, solemn, and humiliating. It is the lowly language of a sinner bowing himself to the dust in the presence of his Creator, and acknowledging that the greatest of his performances is unworthy of the divine notice.

The glory of GOD filled the house, and the fire from heaven consumed the victims that were offered upon the altar.

What a happiness is it to see men of exalted station fulfilling the duties of religion, and setting a pious example to their inferiors and dependants! But every one has the same duties to perform, and the same example to set, let his sphere of action be ever so narrow, and his place in life be ever so humble. When Solomon dedicated the temple, and renewed the covenant with the LORD, all eyes were upon him, and it was to be expected that in the subsequent part of his life he would conform to the declarations which he had made in the presence of all his people.

For a long time indeed he continued faithful to GOD, and experienced in an abundant measure the divine favor upon himself and his kingdom. His name was known far and near, and so great was the renown of his wisdom, that the most exalted personages came from distant parts for the pleasure of his instructive conversation. Among these the most remarkable was the queen of Sheba, whom our LORD calls "the queen of the south." Luke xi. 31. Her journey seems to have been very great, but the fame of this extraordinary prince was such that she readily undertook it, bringing with her "a very great company, and camels that bare spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones; and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart." 2 Chron. ix. 1, &c.

We cannot but admire the ardent love of wisdom which could animate this princess to such a degree as to induce her to leave her own dominions to visit a country of strangers. It is plain, from what our SAVIOUR says, that "she came to hear the wisdom of Solomon," and should therefore rise up in judgment against that generation who would not hear him; that the intent of her journey was not to gratify an idle curiosity on matters of speculation, but to satisfy her mind on the most important points of religion. Well, therefore, did she merit the encomium bestowed upon her by the REDEEMER; and well might he adduce her example as a reproach to that unbelieving generation, who neglected to hear or to profit by the words of life delivered by him who was greater than Solomon. And will not this excellent queen equally appear as a witness against those who, in the full blaze of gospel light, wilfully shut their eyes against the truth, and will not receive the instructions of the King of righteousness, which are "able to make them wise unto salvation?" With what eagerness did this pious woman undertake a perilous journey to gain some information respecting the things of GOD, and yet, when eternal life is brought home to us, when saving grace is tendered for our acceptance, when the Mediator solicits us to be happy by yielding up our souls to him as an acceptable service, we renounce his overtures, and turn a deaf ear to his entreaties. Let the case before us, and the application which our LORD made of it, make a deep impression upon our hearts, and lead us with all humility and anxiety to the feet of the REDEEMER, where, like Mary, we may learn the lessons of heavenly wisdom, and receive the consolations of eternal life.

The greatest part of Solomon's reign was truly glorious; but we are now to consider him as sullying his reputation, and that too at a period of time when the passions, one should have thought, would have been subdued, and when the principles of piety would have become habitual. His marriage with Pharaoh's daughter, which appears to have been in the early part of his life, has been considered by some writers the occasion of his declension from the paths of religion and virtue. But this is not likely, for it is only said in the account of his apostacy that "he loved many strange women, together with [or besides] the daughter of Pharaoh, who was his lawful wife." 1 Kings xi. 1. These women he collected from the neighboring nations, and by them he was enticed to the most shameful acts of idolatry. Now it is not said that Pharaoh's daughter had any concern in perverting the heart of her husband from the true GOD. On the contrary, the cause of his rejecting the truth was his "love of MANY women;" and thus

JOURNEY OF AN ABYSSINIAN QUEEN.

by his conjugal infidelity he was led into apostacy. If the forty-fifth Psalm relates to his marriage with this princess, and if the Canticles are descriptive of their mutual loves, as is generally supposed, then was she a type of the church; consequently, it would be exceedingly injurious to suppose that a woman so honored could be guilty of so great a sin. It is generally and justly concluded that Pharaoh's daughter was a proselyte to the Jewish faith; and therefore, if she had been disposed to alienate the mind of her husband from that faith, it would have been soon after their marriage, when her influence over him was at its greatest pitch. Let not the reputation, then, of this woman, whose praises are celebrated in some of the finest portions of holy writ be injured on a vague conjecture, which has not a shadow of evidence for its support.

It was his connexion with strange women which disgraced the close of Solomon's life; and this lawless love drew him aside after the abominations of the heathen. Religion cannot dwell with impurity. Sensual indulgence will necessarily destroy all love of holiness, and the mind so contaminated can never have any becoming sentiments of God, or any love of his precepts or ordinances. When Solomon first gave way to his evil inclinations, it is probable that he had no thoughts of forsaking the faith and worship to which he had hitherto remained firm; but the descent to ruin is gradual and easy. By suffering his affections to be fascinated by the charms of strange women, he soon gave them an advantage over his principles. No sooner did they gain an influence over his heart, but it was easy for them to prevail upon him to renounce his God. And how often do we see instances of a similar kind! Men who have been virtuously brought up, who have preserved a regular deportment, and have discharged their moral and religious duties with distinguished reputation, by one imprudent connexion have blasted their characters, lost their principles, and have become at length the direct contrast of what they were in times past.

From such instances, then, let young persons in particular learn the force of that incontrovertible maxim, that "evil communications corrupt good manners;" and let them, above all things, learn divine wisdom, which "may keep them from the strange woman, from the stranger that flattereth with her words." Prov. ii. 16. Very striking indeed is the description which Solomon gives of her, and most exactly does he paint the consequences which result from the success of her enchantments. "For the lips of a strange woman drop as a honey-comb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell. Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them. Hear me now, therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth. Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house: lest thou give thine honor unto others, and thy years unto the cruel: lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labors be in the house of a stranger; and thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me! I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly." Prov. v. 3—14.

If such a man as Solomon could not resist the blandishments of vice when he had suffered his affections to be insnared, with what diligence should young and inexperienced minds shun the company of the wanton, dissolute, and profane! We read of his unhappy fall, and we are told that it was followed by severe judgments upon his family and kingdom. The tranquillity which had hitherto distinguished his reign was broken by foreign enemies and by intestine feuds. Hadad, the Edomite, regained the throne of his ancestors, which had been in the possession of the kings of Israel since the conquest of the country by Joab. Rezon, the son of Eliadah, having lived by plunder, like the Arabians, now seized upon Damascus, and made himself king of that country. These two formed an alliance against Solomon, and harassed his dominions very much. To add to his evils, Nathan the prophet was commissioned to reprove him for his odious apostacy, and to denounce this heavy judgment upon him, that his kingdom should be divided into ten parts, the greatest portion of which should be given to his servant. This divine message is supposed to have convinced Solomon of his sin, and to have wrought in him a thorough repentance. It is, however, certain that he became a sincere penitent at last, for the book of Ecclesiastes, in which he so pathetically describes the vanity and vexation of all worldly pursuits, was evidently written at the close of his life. The end of this book sufficiently proves that Solomon

had regained his religious principles, and was thoroughly humbled under the hand of GOD. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter," says he: "Fear GOD and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For GOD shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." Chap. xii. 13, 14.

Let the fall of Solomon humble us in the estimation which we form of ourselves, The most brilliant talents may be prostituted to the vilest of purposes; and they who possess them have great need of cautious watchfulness over their hearts, lest they fall into divers temptations. But in his recovery we have cause to admire the exceeding goodness of GOD, not in restoring Solomon to his favor by a constraining power upon his will, but by sending his minister to set before him the nature of his offence, and its dreadful consequences.

Happy was it for the fallen monarch that he listened to the voice of the prophet, and returned in penitence unto Him whom he had so shamefully forsaken. His guilt was purged away, and he was again made the instrument of instructing the church of GOD. He died in the year of the world 3029, after having reigned forty years; and was succeeded by his son Rehoboam, from whom the ten tribes revolted, agreeably to the word of the LORD, which was declared to his father by the prophet Nathan.

There are three books in the sacred canon which are allowed to have been written by Solomon. The first is the book of Proverbs, the most admirable body of ethics in the world. This book contains the maxims of long experience, framed by one who was well calculated by his rare qualities and endowments to draw just lessons from a comprehensive survey of human life. The next book in the canon is that of Ecclesiastes, in which he gives us the sum of his observations on human life and its pursuits, in the hour of serious consideration and penitence. That which stands the last ought, perhaps, to have been the first in order. This is the book entitled "The Song of Solomon," but which the Chaldee paraphrast styles "The Songs and Hymns which Solomon the prophet, the king of Israel, uttered in the spirit before the LORD." This, beyond a doubt, was an epithalamium, or marriage-song, composed on the celebration of the nuptials between Solomon and the daughter of Pharaoh. But though the song had certainly a reference to the circumstances of a real marriage, yet, as the best writers Jewish and Christian agree, it must have also a farther application, for there are points and allusions in it which never could have belonged to the nuptials of Solomon. It bears all the marks of mystical allegory, and therefore it has in all ages been considered as a figurative representation of the union between MESSIAH and his church.

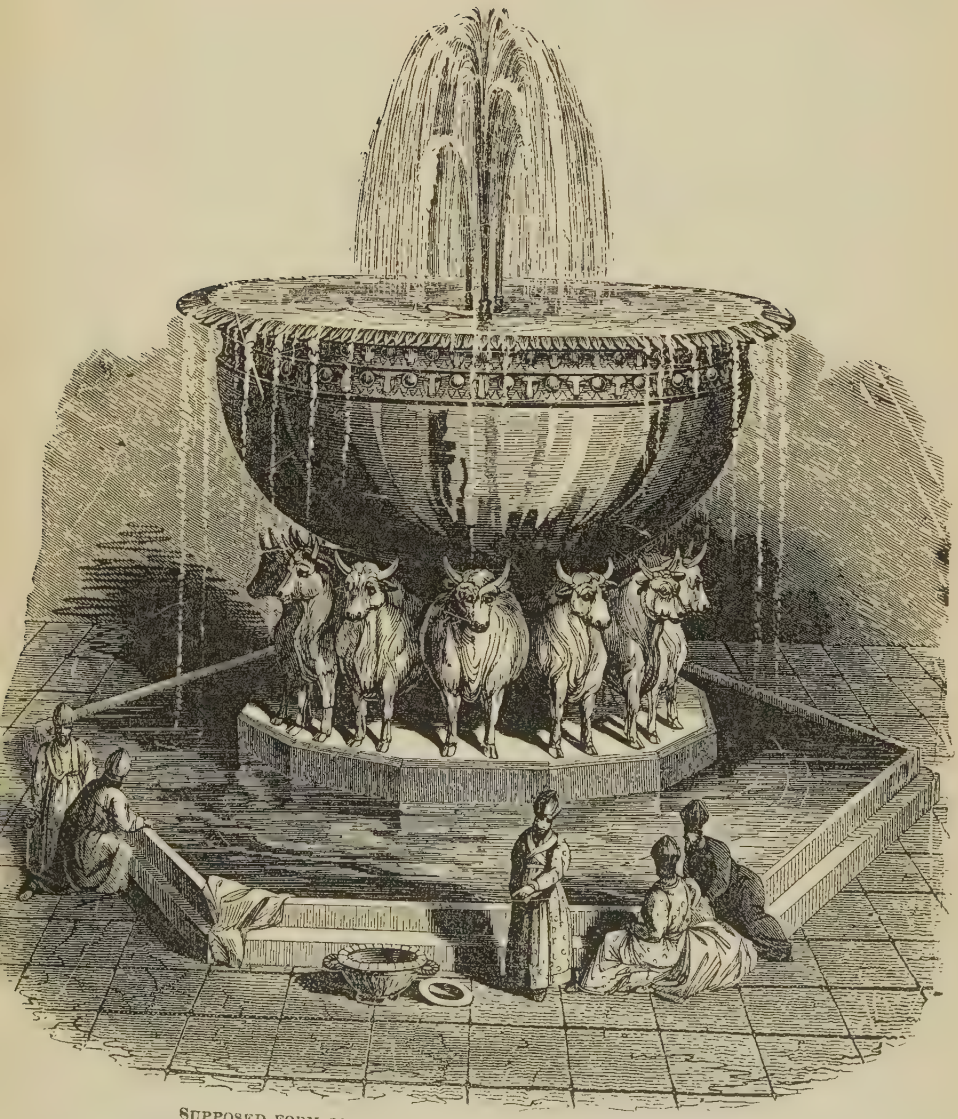
As Solomon had, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, such clear views of the REDEEMER, so was he, in many important and striking particulars, an illustrious type of him.

He was the child of promise and expectation, and his name and qualifications were announced to his father by a messenger divinely appointed. Thus also was CHRIST the child of long and eager expectation to holy men of old; the ancient church looked for him from "the mountain of myrrh and from the hill of frankincense," or from the mystical heights and institutions of the law, with the impatience of those who watch "for the morning light." Song iv. 6. The name and glorious works of the REDEEMER were revealed by a heavenly messenger unto his virgin mother; and when he entered the world a choir of angels proclaimed the "PRINCE OF PEACE." Solomon gave rest to his people, and our Emmanuel has not only reconciled "all things that are in heaven and in earth," but he has purchased for all his faithful subjects an immortal rest in the kingdom of GOD.

The king of Israel was eminently distinguished for his wisdom; and to him came persons of the greatest rank to profit by his instruction. Here also we are reminded of him "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Col. ii. 3. CHRIST is himself the WISDOM OF GOD, and no one can know anything as he should know concerning the divine will, or of the things which belong unto eternal life, but as he is instructed by his Spirit, who is the light of the world.

Solomon immortalized his name by building the most magnificent edifice that ever was constructed for the worship of GOD. He spared neither labor, pains, nor expense to complete this stupendous work, and to render it, as far as human power could go, deserving of the adorable Being to whose service it was devoted.

The Son of GOD is engaged in a far greater undertaking than this; for out of the ruins of the fall he is rearing a glorious building which shall stand for ever. He is



Supposed form of the Brazen Sea in Solomon's Temple.

gathering a church out of all lands, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail Though it may now be poor, and despised, and persecuted, yet in the fulness of time the wise master-builder, who was smitten for our transgressions, and rose again for our justification, "shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, [of angels,] crying, Grace, grace unto it." Zech. iv. 7.

Solomon was numbered with his fathers in the city of David, but our REDEEMER is exalted at the right hand of the throne of GOD, and abideth continually; Solomon's cunning artists and numerous workmen have long since been forgotten, but the faithful servants of CHRIST shall be had in everlasting remembrance, and shall shine as the stars for ever and ever; the extensive buildings of the king of Israel have many ages since mouldered into decay, and not a trace of them remains; but the church of GOD still endures, and shall outlive the wreck of the universe. They who are built upon this foundation shall not be moved, because they are established upon the rock of ages, who is the LORD of life and glory. "Blessed," then, "are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Rev. xxii 14.

ELIJAH NOURISHED BY AN ANGEL. — Page 269.

ELIJAH.

TRANSLATED TO HEAVEN ABOUT THE YEAR OF THE WORLD 3108

THE situations filled by some of the most illustrious Scripture characters were so peculiar, and the commissions with which they were intrusted so extraordinary, that they cannot wholly be proposed for our imitation as examples, though our faith and constancy must be strengthened by a due consideration of their actions. As we are not called upon, like them, to stand forth in the presence of kings, or to execute the judgments of the LORD upon an apostate nation, we can only admire their zeal, and that divine power which operated in them to the reformation of public abuses. It would be the most arrogant and impious presumption in any man, to set himself up after the manner of those worthies, as the minister of divine wrath, without having as plain a commission as they possessed, and that commission confirmed by the power of working miracles. Yet in an inferior degree we may fitly take them for an example, as far as relates to a strict obedience of the divine commands, a generous renunciation of worldly advantages, and a steady opposition to the corrupt principles and maxims of an evil generation.

The life and character of the prophet Elijah present to us a noble picture of disinterested zeal and fervent piety. He was raised up by the ALMIGHTY in a time of almost universal apostacy, when from the king on the throne to the meanest peasant, there was a general departure from the truth.

He was a native of Tishbeh, a city of Gilead, and began to prophecy about the year of the world 3098, when Ahab, the most wicked of the kings of Israel, reigned in Samaria. This monarch appears to have been perverted to idolatry by his marriage with Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians; and this furnishes another instance of the danger that results from imprudent connexions. It is said, "that there was none that did work wickedness in the sight of the LORD like Ahab, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." 1 Kings xxi. 25. Her persuasions appear to have subdued even the natural dictates of conscience; and her influence on his affections prevailed with him to commit the most atrocious offences, contrary to the natural bent of his inclinations. By her means Ahab was not only prevailed with to tolerate idolatry, and to give it countenance by his own presence, but he was induced to make it the national religion, and to substitute the worship of Baal throughout his dominions instead of that of JEHOVAH.

Thus did the counsels of an abandoned woman, and the criminal indulgence of a simple monarch, reduce the Israelitish church to ruins, and cover the land with the most abominable profanations. Matters seem to have gone on for some years in this deplorable way, when Elijah received the divine command to denounce the judgments of the LORD to Ahab. How gracious is the ALMIGHTY, even in the midst of the greatest provocations! He forbears long with the crying sins of a people, and when his justice can withhold punishment no longer, it shall not be inflicted till a previous warning be given, that by a timely repentance the stroke may be averted. The man

ELIJAH IN THE DESERT.

of God at last declares boldly to the apostate king, "that there shall be neither dew nor rain on the land for three successive years." 1 Kings xvii. 1.

The denunciation, though pronounced in the most authoritative manner, and with a solemn appeal to heaven, failed in producing any salutary effects upon the insensible heart of Ahab. The word of the prophet was fulfilled, and the land was parched up on account of the wickedness of them that dwelt therein. But the Lord provided for his faithful servant, who had, regardless of his own personal safety, delivered his message to the abandoned monarch.

Elijah abode by the brook Cherith, where he was regularly supplied "by ravens with bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook."

He was not directed beforehand to lay in a supply of provisions and water, in order that his faith might be tried, and that he might learn from day to day his dependance upon divine Providence. But are we to encourage ourselves from this extraordinary instance, in the expectation that God will supply our wants without the proper exercise of our faculties, and the due improvement of our talent? By no means. In so doing we should be guilty of tempting the Lord, who requires us to be industrious in our callings, and to make use of those means which he has ordained in an ordinary course for our subsistence.

One reason why Elijah was thus miraculously sheltered and supported was, that it was a season of persecution, and when, if he had been discovered, the vengeance of the wicked Ahab, and of the degenerate and discontented nation, might have fallen upon him, as the author of the public calamity. Let no person then, however pious he may be, and however strong in faith, abandon his ordinary business, or that line of life in which God has placed him, under an idea that Providence will take extraordinary ways for his particular maintenance. It is indeed our duty to believe that God equally will take as much care of us as he did of Elijah, but it is our duty to do all that we possibly can, agreeably to the precepts of holy writ, for the support of ourselves and families.

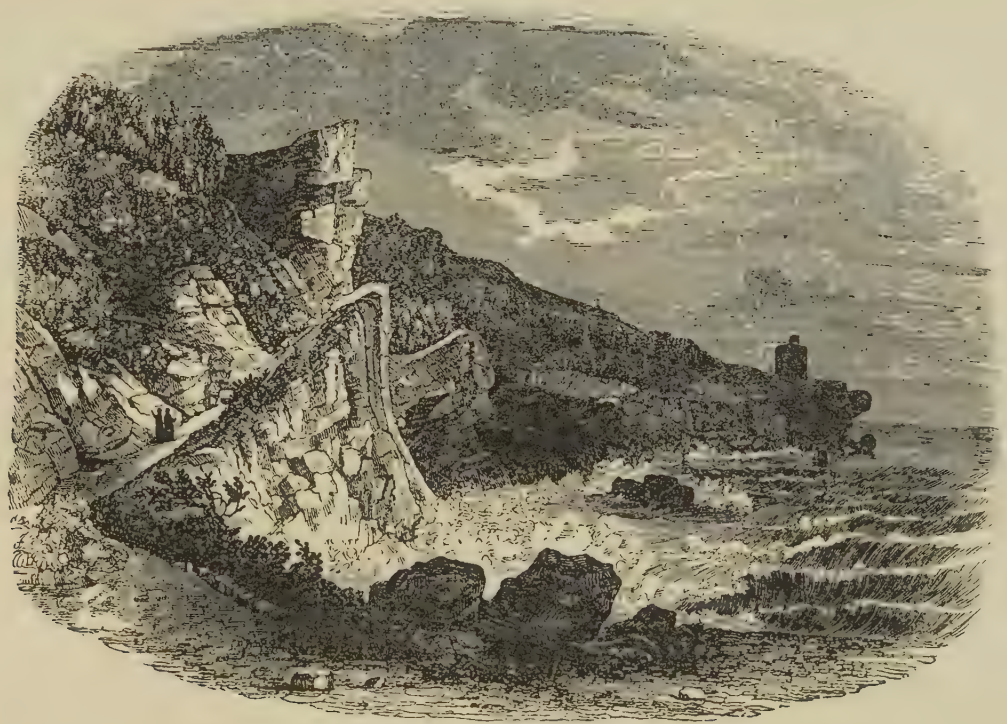
The brook Cherith at length dried up, and the ravens failed in their attendance. Was this intended to drive Elijah to despondency? Rather it seems designed to draw the prophet from his seclusion, and to convince him that it was now full time for him to enter again into the world, and to exert himself in that important mission to which the special command of Heaven had appointed him.

"Arise," saith the Lord, "get thee to Zarephath,* which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there; behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." 1 Kings xvii. 9.

* Zarapha, the ancient Sarepta.—The interest of this place is purely Scriptural; it is a village situated on the side of a hill, two hours and a half distant from Sidon, and about half an hour from the sea; it looks on either side along a line of plain, tolerably cultivated, that leads to Tyre on the left, and to Sidon on the right. The situation has a wild beauty; the Christian who would fain pass a day amidst the undying scenery of the Old Testament, on the hills where the prophets dwelt, in the silent vales where they prayed and meditated, should desire to spend a Sabbath in Sarepta. The valley on which it looks down extends some little distance between the hills; its dwellings and its people are homely and pastoral—no ruin of roofless walls, or old gateway covered with grass and wild flowers, is shown as the remnant of the widow's cottage, tradition has given up its identity in despair, but has preserved the identity of the village; for Sarepta, now called Zarapha, has been inhabited from the remotest times. Although called "a city of Sidon," it was most probably a place of very moderate size and dimensions, the simplicity of whose manners and tastes was uncorrupted by the neighborhood of Tyre and Sidon; it is sixteen miles from the former, and ten from the latter. The distant groves of Sidon, the fine summits of Lebanon, the wilder hills behind its own wild hill, are all visible from Sarepta.

There is no chapel in the village; it is destitute of religious service throughout the year—as if the numerous monasteries of Lebanon could not spare one priest out of their hives to dwell here, or to gather on the Sabbath its villagers, who are Syrian Christians. The brook that supplied the wants of the widow and the prophet may still be on the hill-side; for "the cold-flowing waters that come from the rock of the field" are not wanting. Each of the cottages has two, or at most three, little windows, and two chambers, with earthen floors, and a raised divan of earth against the wall. The stranger is welcome, and the best fare they can supply is set before him; he wants little in such a scene, save the pipe and cup of coffee, and liberty to remain a few hours, and see the sun go down on the shore and sea, on the desert and the gardens, on Lebanon, and on the noble Sheich Mountain, whose wastes of snow are seen in front, towering towards Damascus. The air of the place is healthy; but the winds are wild in winter: there is pasturage in the plain, and even on the declivities, for the flocks; at the foot of the hills are some sepulchral grots cut in the rocks which were probably the burial-places of the ancient people.

SIDON.



SEACOAST BETWEEN TYRE AND SIDON.

Elijah, who had readily followed the command of his God in retiring to that lonely spot, with equal readiness obeyed this injunction also, and set out for the place that was appointed him. All places are alike to him who follows the divine direction, and consults the will of the Lord in every step of his life The crowded city and the solitary desert will be endured with the same evenness of temper by him whose passions are calmed down into an entire submission to the will of God. Those changes and crosses which perplex other minds, only serve to animate his faith, and to quicken him in his duty.

The same divine hand which conducted Elijah to Zarephath, led the poor widow to the gate of the city to gather a few sticks. Worldly wisdom would have provided an asylum for the prophet beneath the roof of some opulent citizen, but Providence directed that the cottage of a disconsolate and abject widow should be his abode. Elijah was contented with the humble condition that was allotted him; and on seeing the poor woman with whom he was to dwell, he desired her to give him a little water to drink. The boon requested was of great consequence in that time of general scarcity, and Elijah was an utter stranger. It is probable that the appearance of the prophet was but mean, since he had for a considerable time resided in a desolate place, and had now taken a long journey; but the benevolent female, attending only to his necessity, immediately went to fetch some water to quench his thirst. To try

Girl giving Drink to a Thirsty Traveller.

her yet more, the man of God ventured to ask her for some bread. This was a very bold request at such a deplorable season, and to a person so wretched, but she did not

When the writer was in this vicinity, the brook in the plain, from which tradition says the prophet drank, was dry; like that of the valley of Elah, whence David took the pebbles for his sling, there was no moisture in its bed. Some fragments of ruins were seen here, as also in the plain, where a portion of the ancient Sarepta once stood. It was noon, and the sea fell heavily on the desolate beach; there was not the shadow of a passing cloud on the hills; in a poor dwelling not far from the sea, coffee was sold, and an Arab came forth to invite us to drink. On the summits and sides of the hills were masses of gray rock: the shepherd was watching his flock, and his Syrian pipe was heard. It was a scene to which the messenger of Heaven might have loved to retire: how interesting and beautiful were the wanderings of the great and hallowed characters of Scripture, in the desert and the plain, on vale and mountain, where their only communion was the love and presence of their God! The retreat of Elijah in the gloomy vale at the back of Carmel is far more desolate than this of Sarepta, yet to the prophet it was indelibly dear.

The poor Arab who sold this coffee could depend only on the custom of the chance passenger; it was seldom that the enthusiast passed his door, and still more seldom that the memorials of ancient and holier times found a responsive chord in the bosom of the native; even the pilgrim

HEWERS OF WOOD.

petulantly refuse it. Her miseries had not hardened her heart, or made her churlish and envious. She was ready to assist and relieve the wayfaring stranger as far as lay in her power; but to take her last morsel from herself and child, this was too much. Yet her answer was respectful and pious: "As the LORD thy GOD liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruise; and behold I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die." She does not absolutely deny the request of the prophet, but tells him a simple and a most affecting tale. She is driven now to the last dregs of her scanty stock of provisions, without the least hope of a further supply. Still there is not a murmuring or a reproachful word in her reply. She is perfectly resigned to the will of Providence, and views the death of herself and son as inevitable, but it is with calmness and fortitude. The prophet does not stop here. He repeats his request, and even in terms of authority, directing her to make him a cake first, and after that for herself and her son. "What!" might she not have said, "wouldst thou have me deprive my darling child of the only poor morsel which is left to preserve his life, to bestow it on one who is wholly unknown to me? Or must I, regardless of his importunities and tears, prepare a cake for thee before his hunger is appeased? Unfeeling man! it would have been most unjust to ask me to divide with thee the only remnant of food that is left for myself, but it is the height of insolence and cruelty to demand that thy wants should be first supplied out of the handful of meal that is left to us!"

There are few who would have seen cause to censure the poor widow if she had expressed herself even in sharper terms than these; yet she did not reprove the man of GOD at all. He did, it is true, declare in the name of the LORD GOD of Israel, "that the barrel of meal should not waste, nor the cruise of oil fail, until the day that the LORD should send rain upon the earth;" but was this assertion calculated to remove her apprehensions of perishing by want, or to inspire her with confidence in the prophet? No. She saw the very man who promised such mighty and improbable things, himself a suppliant for a draught of water to quench his thirst. Might she not then have said, "If thou possessest the gift of prophecy, and the power of working miracles, why art thou thus desolate, and miserable, and hungry? It ill suits these lofty pretensions that thou art now begging a morsel of bread of one who has but a single meal left for herself and child." Let us besides consider that this poor widow was a Zidonian, and consequently a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, and to the covenant of promise. Marvellous then was her faith, that, instead of civilly refusing the prophet's demand, she could rely upon his word: "And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah; and she, and he, and her house did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruise of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD which he spake by Elijah."

Here may we not pause, and say, O woman of Zarephath, great indeed, unspeakably great was thy faith!

She trusted the declaration of the man of GOD, and took him into her house, by which means she not only procured temporal food, but the "bread of life." During the prophet's residence in the house of the poor widow, her son, the hope and stay of her old age, fell sick and died. This indeed was a grievous trial both to her and Elijah. She could not help venting her complaint in keen expressions of agony to the man of GOD, and he was no less concerned for her sake. He poured out his prayer to GOD on her behalf, and in answer to his earnest importunity the child was restored to

does not visit the place. Who is there in the land that cares for the gray rocks and ruinous places of Sarepta? Who is there that pauses beside the forgotten stream, or hangs his harp on its willow?

The people at work in the plain below are gathering in the cotton on the plantations, on which are employed many of the villagers; in former times it was celebrated for the excellence of its wines; and its vineyards, no doubt, clothed the slope of the hill on which the modern village stands. Nearer to Sidon, the hills are fruitful, and are covered with vineyards; but in Sarepta no man now sits under the shadow of his vine and fig-tree. Yet their condition is not an impoverished one, the soil, where cultivated, is fruitful, and well repays the hand of industry; the wants of the natives are few, and their habits frugal; the cultivation of the vines, the cotton and silk, and the care of the flocks, occupy a great number; vegetables of various kinds are easily and quickly raised; gourds, onions, olives, &c., with a little rice, form a daily and nourishing repast; wine, of the common kinds, is cheap; and little animal food is consumed. The people, as in ancient times, love the hills for a habitation rather than the vales; the greater part of the villages are on the declivities. The plain between Tyre and Sidon is wild, but never monotonous, the distant view being always fine; it is crossed by many a dry bed of a torrent, and many a stream, on whose banks are quantities of wild flowers and the oleander in full bloom and beauty.—*Syria Illustrated.*

life. The ways of Heaven are exceedingly mysterious, and things are oftentimes left to the utmost extremity, that man may see and acknowledge the salvation of the LORD. Had the prophet restored the child to health, the gratitude of the mother might have been warm and fervent, but perhaps she would have stopped with barely feeling her obligations to the instrument, instead of raising her faith and thankfulness to the GOD of Elijah. The child, therefore, was suffered even to die, that by his miraculous restoration to life, the mother might learn a full dependance upon the true GOD; and that even the faith of Elijah himself might receive additional strength. That this extraordinary miracle, the first of the kind upon record, had this effect, is evident; for when the enraptured prophet presented the child to his transported mother with these emphatic words, "See, thy son liveth!" this was her pious and grateful confession: "Now by this I know that thou art a man of GOD, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth." Are we disposed to think that if this had happened to us we should have had the same faith and gratitude? Let us consider what astonishing deliverances we have experienced, for which we have never erected an altar of praise, or once bowed our knees in gratitude; how many times we have been raised from the bed of sickness, and snatched as it were from the very jaws of the grave, for which we have never acknowledged the goodness of GOD, nor uttered a single word of thanksgiving to him for his mercies. If we reflect, then, upon our own insensibility and forgetfulness, we shall read the story of the widow of Zarephath, and blush for ourselves.

Elijah continued to reside with this good woman many days, or until the end of the period during which, according to the word of the LORD, he had declared to Ahab that there should be no rain upon the earth. At the end of that time he was commanded to present himself again before that monarch, upon whose heart even this visitation had effected no change. So grievous was the famine, that Ahab and his principal servant, Obadiah, went through the land in different directions in search of water for the cattle. On the way Obadiah was met by the prophet, and as soon as he discovered him "he fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah?" The servant was not like his master. The evil practices of Ahab and Jezebel had not contaminated the heart of good Obadiah, but he retained his integrity even in the very midst of corruption. Here also the goodness and wisdom of the LORD were manifest, for this man by his situation was enabled to shelter a hundred prophets in a time of most grievous persecution. Thus does the ALMIGHTY provide a protector for his church and people in the very bosom of their inveterate enemies. In the profligate court of Ahab there was a righteous Obadiah, who took care of the afflicted servants of GOD; and in the very worst of times, and amidst the most corrupt people, there will be found some who stand steadfast in the faith, and who prove "the salt of the earth."

Elijah directed Obadiah to inform Ahab of his arrival. The command greatly afflicted the pious man, who was afraid that if he told his master Elijah was come, and in the mean time the Spirit of the LORD should convey him away, his life would be the penalty of his false intelligence. Ahab had spared no pains to find the prophet, and had even exacted an oath of all his subjects that they found him not, extending the same rigid inquiry among the neighboring nations. Elijah removed the apprehensions of Obadiah by a solemn asseveration that he must see Ahab that very day. The king, on hearing that Elijah was come, went to meet him; but instead of being confounded in the presence of GOD's minister, whose awful warning had been so exactly accomplished, he had the audacious effrontery to say, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" 1 Kings xviii. 17.

Alas! how common is it for the wicked to accuse the righteous as being the robbers of their comfort and repose! Instead of attributing the judgments which they experience to their sins, and of considering calamity as the just punishment of GOD for their transgressions, they regard those who endeavor to convince them of the truth as the "troublers of their peace," and as gloomy and uncharitable bigots.

Elijah thus nobly retorted the accusation of Ahab: "I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim." He then required of the king to convene all the false prophets on Mount Carmel in the sight of all Israel. That the haughty monarch should obey the command of the man whom he considered as his greatest enemy, is only to be accounted for by supposing that he thought it would be a good opportunity to put him to death. Let this be as it may, Ahab did as he was directed, and at the

time appointed there appeared only Elijah, opposed to eight hundred and fifty false prophets, supported by the presence of the king and his people.

When we cast our eye upon Mount Carmel, and figure to ourselves the man of GOD in this perilous situation, surrounded by the most formidable enemies, we almost tremble for his safety. But Elijah stands undaunted before this mighty assembly, and fearless of the sanguinary tyrant and his bloody priests, he thus boldly addresses the people: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be GOD, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him." Nothing could be more convincing than this demand, yet the people, perhaps afraid of the vengeance of their monarch, remained silent. Thus far indeed their silence looks well, that it was at least respectful, and they did not, out of complaisance to their sovereign, offer any insult to the prophet.

Elijah then proposed that a sacrifice should be offered by the false prophets to their idol, and that one should be offered by himself to the LORD, and that the "GOD who answered by fire, should be regarded as the true GOD."

The challenge was fair and honorable. The idolatrous priests could not well refuse it, and the people by their silence gave it their approbation. Baal's priests accordingly made great preparations, and, after their manner, cut themselves with knives to invoke the presence of their deity. Elijah waited with much patient dignity, and when he saw how they vexed and tortured themselves in vain, he jeered them, under the appearance of stirring them up to new exertions. How forcible is the irony with which he treats these deceivers! "Cry aloud," says he, "for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." Instead of being convinced by this sharp and powerful rebuke, the priests renewed their cries and their ceremonies, but Baal heard them not.

When they had thus consumed the greatest part of the day, Elijah arose, and with great solemnity prepared an altar, and laid the victim thereon. Then he caused water to be poured in abundance three times over the sacrifice, after which he addressed a fervent prayer to JEHOVAH on the behalf of his people Israel. He had scarcely ended when the celestial fire came down and wholly consumed "the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench."

So awful and miraculous a display of divine power, at once carried conviction home to the hearts of the people, and they cried out, "The LORD, he is the GOD; the LORD, he is the GOD."

Elijah then commanded them to execute summary justice upon the priests of Baal, which was done instantly, so that not a man of them escaped. Ahab himself did not interpose his authority to save these deceivers, or to check the zeal of his people; and perhaps the miracle which he had witnessed, filled his mind with a momentary apprehension that the divine vengeance would fall upon his own head.

The man of GOD did not treat him with reproach in the sight of the people, but gave him an assurance that there would soon be an abundance of rain. As Ahab rode on in haste to Jezreel, Elijah ran before him; but on the same day he was obliged to flee thence to avoid the inveterate malice of Jezebel, who, on hearing of the slaughter of her favorite priests, vowed the immediate death of the prophet.

At the divine command Elijah fled to Horeb, the mount of GOD, where he was favored with a manifestation of the divine presence in a very remarkable manner. First, a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks; then an earthquake, and after that a fire; but the LORD, it is said, was not in either of these. After the fire, Elijah heard a still small voice, and immediately the prophet recognised the divine presence. It was in this very mount that the law was first delivered with thunderings, and lightnings, and the sound of a trumpet; and in this day of visitation for the iniquities of Israel, deeper terrors are exhibited before the prophet receives his commission. But these awful signs are only to usher in the divine Majesty GOD prepares his way to the heart by the terror of his judgments, but when he comes himself, it is in love, and goodness, and in "a still small voice of comfort and encouragement." Happy is it for us, if, after the gusts and flashes of the law, we have heard the soft voice of evangelical mercy.

Elijah complained that he had been very jealous for the LORD GOD of hosts, but that notwithstanding all his labors, idolatry overspread the land, and that he only of all the prophets was left, "and they seek my life," says he, "to take it away." From hence it is evident, that the prophet, great as he was, began to yield to despondency,

MOUNT CARMEL.

and to think that the case was so hopeless that there was no farther occasion for his services. But the Almighty judged otherwise, and commanded him to enter the world again, and to anoint Hazael king over Syria, Jehu king over Israel, and Elisha to be prophet in his room. He was also told for his encouragement, that the state of Israel was not so wholly abandoned as he had imagined; for, says the LORD, "I have left me seven thousand which have not bowed unto Baal, nor kissed him." And is not this an encouragement to the virtuous in the worst of times, that, notwithstanding their gloomy apprehensions, the LORD hath his secret ones, his faithful servants, who, in the midst of an evil generation, still retain their integrity, and yield not their hearts or lips to the prevailing abominations?

From this incident we may learn also not to pronounce a hasty judgment upon a people at large, or even upon individuals, but to hope for the best even under the most forbidding appearances.

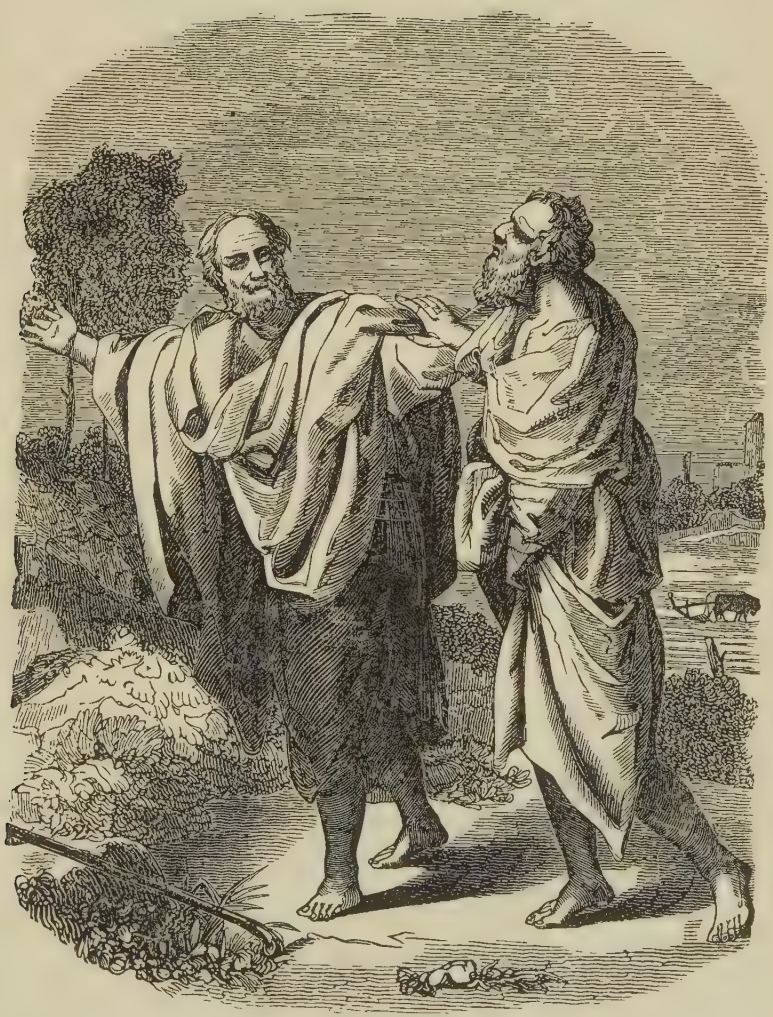
Elijah departed from Horeb as he was directed, and on the way he was joined by Elisha, whom the LORD had called to be his successor.

Once more did the man of GOD present himself before Ahab, but it was on a very shocking occasion. The king, having a desire for the vineyard of Naboth, which adjoined his own palace, wanted to purchase it. Nothing was more disgraceful among the Israelites than to sell their patrimonial land, and therefore Naboth refused Ahab's request, which affected him so much that he fell sick. The occasion of his indisposition being discovered by Jezebel, that infamous woman immediately reviled her husband for his weakness, in not wresting by force that which was denied to his entreaty. She then took the management of the affair into her own hands, and caused Naboth to be put to death as a traitor and a blasphemer. When this inhuman act was over, she tauntingly made Ahab arise, and take possession of the coveted vineyard. But while he was feasting his eyes with his ill-purchased spot of ground, terror met him in the person of Elijah, who pronounced this just sentence upon him: "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine."

The answer of Ahab shows the agitation of a guilty conscience in the most striking manner: "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" 1 Kings xxi. 20. The faithful monitor is always regarded by the wicked as a troublesome intruder, and as the enemy of his quiet. Even conscience itself is thus dreaded, and the guilty wretch endeavors by every method he can devise, to escape from her remonstrances, and to harden himself against her denunciations. But the voice of judgment will at last be heard; conviction must at some time or other pierce through the avenues of the heart; and fear and terror will, in the end, produce either repentance or despair. The prophet replied, "I have found thee;" and proceeded in denouncing the catalogue of woes which should fall on him and his posterity, as also upon his impious consort.

Of Elijah we read no more till after the death of Ahab, when Ahaziah reigned over Israel. This monarch, in a dangerous illness, sent some of his servants to Baal-zebub, the idol of Ekron, to inquire whether he should recover. On the way they were met by Elijah, who commanded them to return to their master with a declaration that his death was certain, as a judgment for renouncing the GOD of Israel to inquire of a pagan oracle. When the king heard this sentence, and understood that it had been delivered by Elijah, he sent a troop of soldiers to apprehend him. But when they came to the prophet, and demanded him to go with them, the fire of heaven descended and consumed the whole company. The king, regardless of this awful event, sent another troop, who perished in the same manner. This judgment failed to intimidate Ahaziah, though he was afraid of dying himself, and he dispatched a third company. The leader of this band earnestly supplicated the prophet to spare his life and the lives of the men who were with him, and the LORD commanded Elijah to go down with them to the king. In the chamber of the monarch did the prophet repeat his former declaration, and the power of the ALMIGHTY shielded him from his malice. This was the last public act in Elijah's most extraordinary life. Warned of his approaching departure, he left the schools of the prophets, over which he had presided, and, accompanied by Elisha, went over the Jordan, the waters of which he divided with his mantle. On a sudden appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, "and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." 2 Kings ii. 11.

This was the second instance of the kind from the creation of the world, and it was doubtless intended, like that, to confirm the great doctrine of a future state. It



ELIJAH AND ELISHA.

this respect, but in this alone, Elijah resembled the great REDEEMER of the church, who hath "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

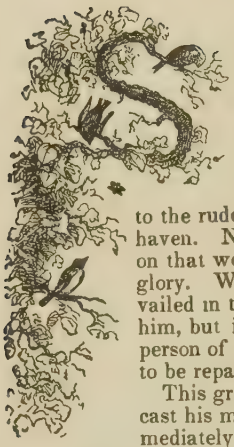
This great prophet and St. John the Baptist are usually considered as parallels; and the latter is indeed often called by the express name of Elias, which has led some to suppose, but certainly very erroneously, that he actually was the Tishbite himself. But the reason why this name was given to him could only be on account of a resemblance in character, circumstances, and ministry. They were both men of inflexible austerity of manners; they were both sent to denounce the vengeance of Heaven against a degenerate nation, and to call sinners to repentance by a display of the fiery judgments of the law.

On one glorious occasion more did Elijah appear upon earth, when with the illustrious legislator of the Jews, he descended on Mount Tabor, and held a mysterious conference with the MESSIAH. It was indeed a glorious sight to behold Moses, the promulgator of the law; Elijah, the great restorer of it, when it lay buried in ruins and covered with corruption; and JESUS CHRIST, the Son of GOD, and the blessed fulfiller of all righteousness, assembled together as it were in consultation upon the great work of human redemption. Then indeed was visibly made conspicuous that beautiful and affecting declaration of the psalmist: "Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Ps. lxxxv 10.

MOUNT TABOR.

ELISHA.

DIED IN THE YEAR OF THE WORLD, 3163.



O rare are men of extraordinary piety and usefulness, that when they are taken away, we are apt to adopt the complaint of the Psalmist: "Help, LORD, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men." Ps. xii. 1. But though our regret may be allowable, as far as it flows from zeal for the cause of religion, yet it may extend beyond justifiable bounds; when by regarding the loss of those excellent persons as irremediable, we seem to betray a want of confidence in the Almighty pilot, who will not leave his church to the rude storms of the world, but will safely guide it into the desired haven. Nor will he be without a succession of faithful servants to carry on that work which he has planned, and which must be perfected in glory. When Elijah was removed from the world, great concern prevailed in the schools of the prophets, and much inquiry was made after him, but it was soon discovered that his gifts were multiplied in the person of his successor; and they who mourned for Elijah as a loss not to be repaired, now rejoiced in Elisha as an inestimable blessing.

This great man was following the plough of his father when Elijah cast his mantle over him, and called him to the prophetical office. Immediately did Elisha yield obedience to the appointment; and though it was at a time when nothing could be obtained by it but trouble and persecution, yet he readily renounced father and mother, and house and friends, for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. From that time "he ministered unto Elijah," or became his immediate disciple and constant attendant. He was honored with witnessing the translation of his master, and, agreeably to his own request, obtained with the falling mantle of Elijah a double portion of his spirit. After his master's assumption Elisha measured his steps back by the way in which he came, and when he arrived at the brink of the Jordan opened to himself a passage as Elijah had done. The action was observed by the sons of the prophets, who in consequence of it readily yielded him obedience as the successor of the illustrious head who had been taken from them.

The number and greatness of the miracles wrought by Elisha far exceeded those of his predecessor, and in many respects bore a nearer resemblance to those of CHRIST than what were performed by any other prophet.

On the translation of his master he went and resided for a time at Jericho, which, though pleasantly situated, was destitute of wholesome water, and the land around it was barren. At the request of the inhabitants Elisha healed the waters, and even changed the nature of the soil. The manner of his performing this miracle is worthy of observation. He cast salt into the spring, and the streams were purified. Does not this teach us that as the heart of man is the fountain of evil, purifying grace must begin there in correcting its principles and motives, ere there can possibly be any effectual reformation of life? If the spring of action is foul, all that flows from it will be evil, and the soil will be unfruitful of good works. There cannot, then, be any beneficial change of life till the heart is first cleansed from the love of sin, and made to delight in holiness.

We have now witnessed a miracle of mercy; the next is an awful display of judgment. As Elisha was removing from Jericho to Bethel, there met him a company of

children, who, instead of reverencing the gray hairs and sacred office of the prophet, followed him with reproaches, crying, "Go up, thou bald head." The expression seems to imply a mockery of the story of Elijah's assumption. Great, however, must have been the iniquity of the Bethelites, to provoke the meek Elisha to pronounce the divine vengeance upon their children. The dreadful sentence was delivered in the name of the LORD, and instantly two she-bears rushed from the woods, and slew forty-

SYRIAN BEAR.

two of them. 2 Kings ii. 24. We may well pause upon this affecting circumstance, and stand in awe of the tremendous judgments of GOD. Bethel had long been distinguished as the residence of the prophets; but a sad declension appears now to have taken place. Notwithstanding their eminent privileges, the Bethelites were sunk in profaneness and infidelity, else their children would not have treated the minister of GOD in this reproachful manner, nor would so signal a mark of divine displeasure have punished their crime. Elisha was going to fix his abode at Bethel, as being, agreeably to its name, the "house of GOD;" but on approaching the place he found that the fear of GOD was departed from the people, and therefore the crying iniquities of the parents were sorely punished in this judgment on their children. And shall not the LORD of all the earth do right? Is he accountable unto us for any of his acts, even those which human pride is apt to treat as irreconcileable with justice? Let us reflect how often thousands of infants have been swept away by a devouring pestilence, or been swallowed up by an earthquake; and when we can account for these visitations, then may we censure "the word of the LORD, which he spake by the prophet Elisha."

From this incident parents may learn what an obligation they live under to bring their children up in the "nurture [i. e. discipline] and admonition of the LORD." Ephes. vi. 4.* It is their duty to instil into the infant minds of their offspring a profound reverence for religion, for its ordinances, and for its ministers. If by their neglect, connivance, or encouragement, their children should get a habit of mocking sacred things, treating disrespectfully religious persons, violating the Sabbath, or of profaning the name of the Most High, they may be assured that a severe account will one day

* Παιδεια, which our translators have rendered here *nurture*, is in other places more properly translated *chastening*, or *correction*, as in Heb. xii. 11

be exacted of them for those evils which, by timely care, they might have prevented! How many who have fallen victims to lawless pleasure, or been cut off from society by the hand of justice, have in their last moments had reason to bewail, if not to curse, the criminal indulgence and examples of their parents! If therefore parents would not have their declining years rendered miserable by being witnesses of their children's ingratitude, impiety, and punishment, let them thoroughly attend to and carefully practise the wise man's counsel: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Prov. xxii. 6. And let children, and even young ones too, learn from this melancholy story to avoid evil words and reproaches, and to pay due respect to aged persons.

Bethel was no longer worthy of being honored with the presence of the prophet, and therefore he proceeded on to Samaria, where for a time he fixed his residence.

We next meet with him attending the armies of Israel, Judah, and Edom, which were confederated against the Moabites. The allies were drawn into a most critical situation, and were in as much danger of perishing from the want of water as from the attack of the enemy. In this dilemma the kings waited upon Elisha, that he might inquire of the LORD for them. Till men are reduced to calamity, and are in hazard of perishing, they have seldom any inclination to ask counsel of the LORD. These kings had equally neglected GOD and his prophet in the commencement and progress of this expedition; but now they can be submissive and devout when they stand in need of the divine interposition. Two of these kings were idolaters; but Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, remained steadfast in the worship of Jehovah. In regard to him, therefore, Elisha vouchsafed to seek the LORD, and received an assurance that they should not only be delivered from their present distress, but prove victorious over their enemies. The event confirmed the prediction, but this neither converted the Edomitish monarch, nor produced the reformation of Jehoram, king of Israel.

The sacred history has recorded a series of miracles wrought by Elisha as in quick succession, though we may well suppose that there were intervals between them, during which he was employed as a preacher of righteousness, and as the president of the college of prophets. The first is that of multiplying the poor widow's pot of oil, by which she was enabled to satisfy the demands of an inexorable creditor, and to rescue her two sons from bondage. The woman's case was truly pitiable. Her husband had been a prophet of the LORD, and a faithful one. It shows the lamentable declension to which religion must have been reduced at that time, when an Israelite could have so little regard for the widow and orphans of a prophet, as to seize the youths as bondmen for the debt of their father. The debt, however, was just, and Elisha would not sanction anything like dishonesty, though the conduct of the creditor was most inhuman. The pot of oil was miraculously increased, and there was not only a sufficient quantity to discharge the debt, but enough left to maintain the family afterwards. No part was to be appropriated to their own benefit till their debts were first paid, intimating to us that a scrupulous regard to justice is one of the first principles of religion.

The next circumstance in the story of Elisha is one of the most beautiful and instructive in the book of GOD. In his frequent visits to Shunem the prophet was particularly noticed by a person of distinction, or, according to the language of Scripture, "a great woman." She was, indeed, great, not only in worldly substance, but in qualities of a more valuable nature, in humility, benevolence, and in piety. She invited Elisha to her house as oft as he passed that way, and at length importuned her husband to build a room apart by itself for the prophet, which she furnished with all things necessary for his use. As generous minds are never easy till they have repaid, in some degree or other, the obligations which have been conferred on them, Elisha called for this Shunammite, and, after acknowledging her kindness and care, asked what return he should make: "Wouldst thou," says he, "be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host?" 2 Kings iv. 13. The question presented a fair opportunity to an ambitious mind to gratify itself amply for having incurred a trifling expense. Many bestow favors with the view of receiving a large return, though in their professions they appear to be wholly moved by a disinterested principle. This was not the case with the Shunammite. Her answer to the offer of Elisha at once shows a contented and a liberal mind. "I dwell," says she, "among mine own people." She judiciously considered that the happiness which she enjoyed in the bosom of her family, and in the circle of her friends, was far preferable to the favor of princes and

to the splendor of a court. Elisha being at a loss what farther to propose, his servant intimated that the good Shunammite was without a child. On this the prophet called her again, and gave her the promise of a son, which seemed so incredible, under all circumstances, that she said, "Nay, my lord, thou man of GOD, do not lie unto thine handmaid." But the declaration of Elisha was accomplished, and she had the pleasure of embracing a son in her old age. But temporal blessings are of uncertain duration, and the ALMIGHTY oftentimes sees fit to take them from us, that our hearts may not be too much set upon them. For a gracious purpose, the child of the good Shunammite was suddenly taken sick, and expired in the arms of his mother. The shock was dreadful, but her faith was strong. Without any outcry, she laid the corpse upon the prophet's bed, and set out instantly for the abode of Elisha on Mount Carmel. The prophet descried his benevolent hostess when she was a considerable way off, and sent his servant Gehazi to inquire "whether all was well with herself, with her husband, and with her child." But the good woman was not willing to communicate the grief of her heart to a servant; she therefore only replied, "It is well." What a spirit of resignation runs through this concise and dignified answer! However great might be her agony, she was yet unwilling to express anything like dissatisfaction with the awful visitation of Providence. We are not forbidden to grieve, but we are commanded not to "sorrow as those who are without hope." A gleam of comfort beamed upon the heart of this excellent woman as she drew near the prophet, and between the struggling of anguish, fear, and hope, faith prevailed, and enabled her to confess that "all was well."

On coming into the presence of the man of GOD, she fell at his feet, and embraced them in silent agony. Gehazi, thinking this action irreverent, endeavored to thrust her away, but his officiousness was rebuked by his master, who with much sympathetic tenderness exclaimed, "Let her alone, for her soul is vexed within her; and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me."

When the power of speech returned, she declared the cause of her journey in these striking terms: "Did I desire a son of my lord? Did not I say, Do not deceive me?" The prophet needed no farther information. It was evident that the child, which had been freely bestowed, without any importunate solicitations of her own, was snatched away by the hand of GOD. Elisha's grief was roused, and for once he seems to have acted from the impulse of his own mind, without consulting the divine direction. He gave his staff to Gehazi, with orders to hasten to the house, and to lay it upon the face of the child. But the mother, though she heard the commission, and knew the power with which Elisha was invested, would not leave him, on which he arose and went with her. The servant followed his master's orders, but he wanted his master's faith, and a deadly stillness continued when Elisha and the mother entered the room. The prophet then "prayed unto the Lord;" and so efficacious were his petitions, that the vital principle reanimated the body, and the child was restored to the arms of his mother. Extraordinary instances of the power of prayer are thus recorded, not that we should expect miraculous effects to result from our supplications, but to encourage us in a practice which will strengthen us in our religious course, preserve us from despondency and give us a superiority over the temptations and troubles of the world. The story of the excellent Shunammite shall be closed at this place, though in so doing, it is necessary to invert the order of time. The prophet, foreseeing a grievous famine which was about to visit the land, from a grateful sense of the favors which he had received, directed her to "arise with all her household to go into some other country." She knew the integrity of Elisha too well to despise his counsel, though it subjected her to much inconvenience. She obeyed "the saying of the man of GOD, and went and sojourned in the land of the Philistines." 2 Kings viii. 2. By how many blessings is a little courtesy repaid! After an absence of seven years, she returned to her native land, where she found that her estate had been seized upon by some of her rapacious countrymen. Thus cruelly deprived of her property, she was under the necessity of repairing to court, and of laying her case before the king. At another time perhaps her suit would not have been very favorably received; but the ALMIGHTY, who guided the widow and orphan to the palace of Jehoram, so ordered it, that at the very moment when they entered, Gehazi, Elisha's servant, was engaged in relating that part of the Shunammite's story, the restoration of her son. The narrative was most interesting, and it was rendered still more so, by Gehazi's crying out, "My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son whom Elisha restored to

The Shunammitish Woman Pleading for her Lands.

life." The king was desirous of hearing the story over again, and it so greatly affected him, that he instantly ordered her estate to be restored, together with all the profits that had arisen from it in her absence.

During the famine which Elisha had predicted, he resided much with the sons of the prophets, to comfort them in that season of distress. On one occasion he saved them all from being poisoned by some noxious plants, which had been unwittingly cast into their pottage. And when a present of bread was brought him, he distributed it generally among them.

JEWISH PHYSICIAN. Modern Oriental.

It calls for our astonishment, that the only instance of a miraculous cure being wrought by Elisha was in healing the leprosy of a stranger. Our LORD informs us that there were many Israelites afflicted with this loathsome distemper at that time, but that not one leper was cleansed by Elisha but Naaman, the Syrian. This person was no less than the general of the Syrian armies, and the favorite of the king his master. But with all his valor and his greatness Naaman was a leper. No rank is exempted from the most loathsome diseases, nor can all the wealth of the mightiest empire preserve or purchase health. Doubtless Naaman had employed many physicians, and sought far and near for a remedy, but the leprosy was an incurable distemper. From slight causes and by feeble instruments does GOD bring about his gracious designs. The Syrians, in one of their expeditions against Israel, had taken captive a little maid, and she waited upon Naaman's wife. The advantages of a pious education were never more remarkable than in this incident. The parents of this little maid were doubtless much concerned at her being carried into captivity, but hereby she was honored in being the instrument of converting her master, and perhaps his whole family. Observing the wretched condition of Naaman, she exclaimed: "Would to GOD my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him

of his leprosy." 2 Kings v. 3. These words being reported to Naaman, he instantly obtained a letter from his master to the king of Israel, and set out for that country. When Jehoram read the letter which desired, or rather demanded of him to cure Naaman of his leprosy, he was much concerned, and attributed it to an intention of seeking a quarrel with him. Elisha, having heard of the king's consternation, despatched a messenger to him with this dignified reproof: "Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

The prophet's message being communicated to Naaman, he hastened to the house of Elisha; but the man of God, willing to humble the pride of the courtier, condescended not to wait upon him, but sent a messenger, saying: "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean."

This want of respect irritated the lofty mind of the Syrian, who thought that all Israel would have regarded him with reverence. But Elisha was desirous not only of curing the man of his outward leprosy, but of that fouler one which defiled his heart. This was only to be accomplished by making him humble and submissive to the simplest instruments and means which should be appointed to heal him. Naaman first thought himself insulted by the man of God, and then despised the mode prescribed for his cure. In this state of mind he was going away, when one of his servants remonstrated with him upon the inconsiderateness of his conduct: "If the prophet," said he, "had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather then when he saith unto thee, Wash and be clean?"

This expostulation had the desired effect. Naaman's rage and pride were subdued, he went as he was ordered, washed himself in Jordan, and was healed. From the river he returned a new man, and waited upon the prophet with humility and gratitude. He was now convinced that God was only known in Israel, and professed his resolution of worshipping him only. He pressed upon Elisha the acceptance of the most costly presents, but the prophet refused them all. He had no concern about the things of this world, or for his own honor. It was enough for him to promote the glory of God and the welfare of his fellow-creatures. But Gehazi was dissatisfied with this performance of his master. He could not conceive what impropriety there was in receiving some return for so great a cure; and his heart fixed itself upon the treasures which the prophet had rejected. He therefore followed the procession, and pretended that he was sent by Elisha to request a talent of silver and two changes of raiment for two young men of the sons of the prophets who were just come to visit him. He might certainly have had what he wanted without telling a lie to obtain it; but a well-invented tale he thought would screen his master and himself. Naaman doubled what he requested; and Gehazi, having deposited his treasure carefully, went in as usual to attend upon his master. Little did he imagine that the eye of the prophet had traced him in all this artful business. One falsehood naturally produced another. Elisha, on his entrance, asked whence he came? Gehazi, still thinking himself secure, replied: "Thy servant went no whither." One who had witnessed so many instances of Elisha's foresight and power ought to have trembled when the searching question was put to him; but Gehazi had no alternative between an acknowledgment of the fact and direct falsehood. The love of his ill-gotten wealth prevented him from making an ingenuous confession, and he hoped that a lie would impose upon his master. But in this he was wofully mistaken. The prophet, after sharply reproving him for the baseness of his conduct, inflicted on him that disease of which Naaman had been healed, and "he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow."

But though Gehazi is gone, the sons of the prophets increase to such a degree that their dwelling is too small for them. They, therefore, humbly ask leave of Elisha to erect a larger house on the banks of the Jordan, and it is granted. While one of these pious men was felling some timber, his axe dropped into the river. The loss was deeply lamented, for the axe was borrowed. Elisha was touched with compassion, because the poor man's complaint resulted from an honest motive, and he restored the axe again by causing it to swim on the surface of the water. This incident may ap-

pear trifling; but nothing is trifling that is recorded in the book of GOD, to strengthen our faith, and to regulate our practice.

In a war which raged between Syria and Israel, the intelligence of the prophet defeated at various times the designs of the enemies of his country. This so provoked the Syrian monarch, that he despatched a number of men to seize upon Elisha in Dothan; but when they compassed the place they were smitten with blindness, and in that condition the prophet conducted them to Samaria. There they lay at the mercy of the king of Israel, who would willingly have destroyed them all; but Elisha, after restoring them to sight, fed them and sent them away in peace.

The war, however, still continued; and the king of Syria, unmoved by this noble act of generosity, laid such close siege to Samaria, that the most dreadful famine raged in the place. Jehoram, regarding Elisha as the author of all this calamity, vowed his destruction, and sent a messenger to put him to death. But the prophet, conscious of the protection of the ALMIGHTY, stirred not from his house. He dismissed the courtier with a declaration that, notwithstanding the dismal state of things, in a few days all should be reversed, and plenty should succeed to dearth. A nobleman who heard the prediction could not help expressing his unbelief, and that in terms of ridicule. Elisha calmly replied, that though he would see the fact with his eyes, he should not partake of the blessing. The prophecy was accomplished; for the Syrians raised the siege on a sudden, and the city was instantly supplied with provisions. The nobleman, as he stood in the gate, was trod to death by the crowd, and thus became a fearful example of the sinfulness of infidelity.

Not long after this we find Elisha at Damascus, the ancient capital of Syria. The animosity of Benhadad, king of the country, was now removed, for he lay upon the bed of sickness; and hearing that the man of GOD was in the city, he sent to him Hazael, his prime minister, with a splendid present, that he might inquire of the LORD for him, whether he should recover. However men may despise religion and its ministers in health and prosperity, yet in sickness and affliction they would gladly have their assistance.

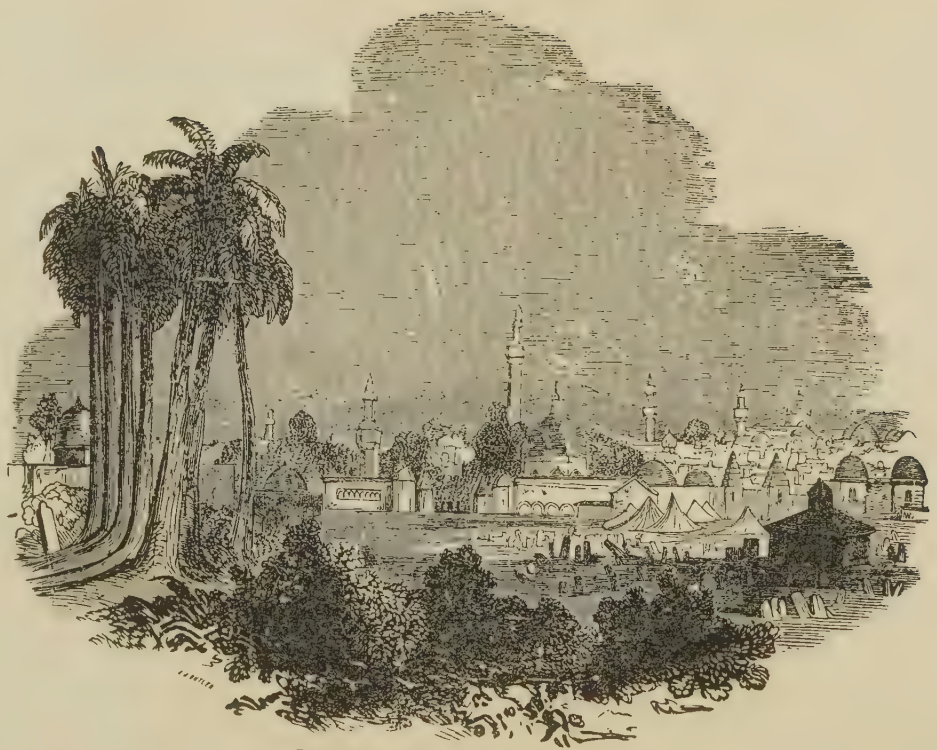
The disorder of Benhadad was not mortal, but his fate was sealed by other means. Elisha replied, "that he might recover," or that it was certainly possible for him to get the better of his sickness; "nevertheless," he adds, "the LORD hath showed me that he shall surely die." 2 Kings viii. 10.

In pronouncing these words, the prophet fixed his eyes so intently upon the countenance of the messenger, that Hazael blushed. Guilty consciences naturally shrink from the scrutinizing observation of the righteous. As Elisha surveyed the features of this treacherous courtier, his feelings were so uncommonly agitated, that a torrent of tears gushed from his eyes. Astonished at this, Hazael respectfully asked, "Why weepeth my lord?" The man of GOD readily answered: "Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong-holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child." On viewing these horrible scenes, though but in prospect, it is not surprising that the benevolent heart of Elisha should be melted, and that his eyes should be filled with tears; but what must have been the sensations of Hazael, when the black catalogue of crimes was prefaced with the assertion that he should be the perpetrator! He could not believe that it was in his nature, even though he should ever possess the opportunity, to be guilty of such infamous cruelties. "But what!" he exclaims, "is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" Elisha knew more of his heart than Hazael himself did, and, therefore, he only replied, "The LORD hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria."

This very man, who could put on the appearance of virtuous indignation at being supposed capable of such abominable actions, began his career of wickedness the very next morning, by murdering his master, and usurping his throne. After such a crime as this all the others followed, and the prophet's prediction was literally fulfilled.

Elisha had now attained an extraordinary age, but his attention to the interests of his country, and to the high duties of his office, continued to the last. Being prevented by his infirmities from anointing Jehu king over Israel, according to the divine appointment, he commissioned a young prophet to officiate in his stead.

But all human greatness and excellence are mutable, and even "prophets do not live for ever." Elisha had seen his great master carried away in a chariot of fire to the realms of glory; but though his own life was more varied, and though he inherited



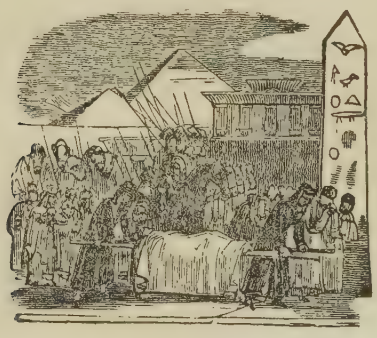
DAMASCUS. From Laborde's Syria.

a double portion of Elijah's spirit, yet he must lie down on a sick bed, and enter the world of spirits, through the valley of the shadow of death. In his last illness he was visited by Joash, king of Israel; for though that monarch valued not the holiness of the prophet, he had a high esteem of his services. He wept over the pallid countenance of the man of GOD, and, sensible of the loss which the kingdom would sustain in his death, he exclaimed: "O my father, my father! the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof!" 2 Kings xiii. 14.

The dying prophet directed Joash to take a bow and arrow, and to shoot eastward, laying at the same time his hands upon those of the king. This significant act was intended to express that Israel should prevail over Syria. Joash was next commanded to take the arrows and to smite them on the ground. Not knowing the meaning of this symbolical ceremony, and perhaps offended at the injunction, he smote only three times, and then stayed. This roused the indignation of Elisha, who thus reproved him: "Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice."

Shortly after this, the man of GOD expired, at the age of ninety years, and the sixtieth of his ministry. But the miraculous power, which had so greatly distinguished him in life, did not end even in the silent tomb; for the dead body of a man being cast into his sepulchre revived immediately on touching the bones of the prophet.

This miracle seems to have been intended to correct an increasing spirit of infidelity in that age, by showing not only the certainty of a future state, but of the resurrection of the dead. Nor is it fanciful to consider it as alluding to that divine life which is imparted to men "dead in trespasses and sins" by the death of the MESSIAH. Had he not been laid in the sepulchre a breathless corpse, we should never have experienced any spiritual motion, or had the slightest glimpse of immortality, but should have continued for ever in darkness and in "the shadow of death." Luke i. 79. From this wretched and helpless state we are raised by virtue of his voluntary passion and triumphant resurrection. We regain that life which was lost by Adam, and even our dead bodies also shall be raised with his glorious body, agreeably to that remarkable prediction of the evangelical prophet: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead." Isaiah xxvi. 19.



DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN.

DANIEL.

DIED ABOUT THE YEAR OF THE WORLD 3470; AGED 90.

URE and undefiled religion is not confined to men of any one rank or situation in life. Some places, indeed, seem like an unfavorable soil for the growth of this noble plant; yet, notwithstanding difficulties, it has been known to flourish in all. The grace of GOD is sufficient to preserve us, let our circumstances be whatever they may; and without such assistance we are nowhere secure.

The holy Scriptures exhibit instances of the power of religion in persons of various descriptions, that every station of life may be furnished with suitable examples as well as precepts. A blessing is indeed pronounced upon evangelical poverty, (Matt. v. 3,) by our SAVIOUR, and an apostle has assured us that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called:" (1 Cor. i. 26:) but it would be unjust to infer hence that the rich and honorable are not within the compass of the plan of redemption, or even that they are less regarded by the GOD of love than those who are poor and in obscurity. By poverty of spirit our LORD means lowliness of heart, and a renunciation of all plea of righteousness in ourselves; and the apostle only says that GOD hath chosen feeble instruments for the propagation of the gospel, that its success might not appear to be the effect of human policy or power. Both in the Old and New Testaments we meet with many shining examples of piety and usefulness in the most elevated stations of life.

In seasons of darkness, corruption, and tribulation, the ALMIGHTY has raised instruments in high stations, by whom his afflicted church has been delivered from misery, and religion been made to flourish with new splendor.

This was strikingly the case in the long Babylonish captivity, which began in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when Nebuchadnezzar took the city of Jerusalem, and returned into his own country with immense spoils and numerous prisoners, among whom were Jehoiakim himself and all his family.

The haughty conqueror, not content with plundering the temple of the LORD, and depositing the sacred vessels in the house of his idols, and of subjugating a nation to bondage and leading their monarch in chains, would likewise be served by some of the captive princes, and therefore commanded his principal eunuch to seek out certain children of the blood royal, "in whom was no blemish," to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

It is not unreasonable to suppose that the design of Nebuchadnezzar in this was to pervert the principles of these youths, and to effect, if possible, the destruction of the very language, as well as the religion of the Jews, by their means. But the craftiness of men is overruled by the providence of GOD to the advancement of the cause it is intended to destroy. This was remarkably the case in the present instance; for though Daniel, and three others of the royal house of Judah, were taken into the palace of the king of Babylon, and ordered to be brought up after the manner of the country, yet their religious principles were too firmly fixed to be corrupted. In that dangerous situation, Daniel, upon whom, according to the eastern custom, was conferred the name

EUNUCH.

of Belteshazzar, gained the favor of the eunuch, and prevailed upon him to dispense with their refusal of the food which was sent them from the royal table, and to allow them only pulse and water in its room. Such an act of temperance and religious obedience in persons of their age and condition calls for our admiration, and affords a lesson full of valuable instruction. In giving a preference to aliments so very simple over the rich and tempting viands that were set before them, they evinced not a superstitious, but a magnanimous spirit. By the express injunctions of their religion they were not only restricted from particular meats, but from all of whatever kind that had been profaned to an idolatrous purpose. The provisions which were ordered them by the king had, no doubt, been previously offered or consecrated to his idols, in consequence of which they were justly regarded as an abomination by these pious Israelites. In their scrupulous adherence to the laws of JEHOVAH, what a beautiful example have we to be careful how we comply with the sinful customs of the world, though allured to do so by the most flattering offers of wealth and honor! In their abstinence and self-denial, rather than violate the commandment of GOD, we are taught to lay a restraint upon our appetites, and to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Nor is their story without encouragement; for though their diet was the lowest and simplest possible, it was so far from injuring their health, or depressing their mental faculties, that it produced quite opposite effects. They appeared much better than those who did eat of the king's provisions, and so apt were they to learning, that when they were examined by the king "he found them ten times better skilled in all matters of wisdom and understanding than all the magicians and astrologers that were in his realm." As temperance is the grand preservative of health, so it is the most conducive to the improvement of the mind, by keeping its faculties clear and always ready for exercise.

The wisdom of Daniel was particularly conspicuous; for amidst the vast variety and extent of it, with which his mind was enriched, through GOD's blessing upon his integrity, "he had understanding in all visions and dreams." This was a degree of knowledge peculiarly calculated to render him acceptable in that superstitious country, which was overrun with magicians and astrologers. Every vagary of the imagination was regarded by the Chaldeans as portentous, and nothing was undertaken by them without an astral calculation, or an oracular direction.

This eminent talent of Daniel was soon brought into exercise, and procured for him the favor of the king of Babylon. That monarch had been greatly disquieted in his

sleep by a remarkable dream, which, however, he could not recollect when he awoke, though the horror occasioned by it still remained. In this state of mind he sent for his soothsayers, and preposterously required of them not only the interpretation, but the particulars of the dream itself. They were full as well qualified for the one as the other; but with this difference, that if the vision had been told them, they were too great adepts in their profession not to have hammered out a plausible and flattering exposition But the ALMIGHTY was now determined to prove their folly and presumption, by making Nebuchadnezzar demand that which lay not in their power to perform. They readily confessed their inability to comply with the demand, and that none could show it except the gods, whose dwelling was not with flesh." Dan. ii. 11.

The same thing ought to have been acknowledged by them with respect to the interpretation of dreams remembered and related, as of the relation of one which had escaped the memory. But these deceivers were compelled by necessity to confess the truth, and thereby destroyed the credit of their profession. Nebuchadnezzar, so far from being satisfied with their reply, in a fit of rage issued his mandate that all the wise men, that is, all the professors of the occult sciences, should instantly be put to death. In this massacre Daniel and his three friends were in equal danger of being slain with the rest; but on hearing of the edict, they had recourse to prayer that the secret might be discovered. The design of Providence in the whole affair was to bring Daniel into power by revealing to him the mysterious secret; but even the blessings which Heaven has purposed to bestow must be sought for by prayer. These pious Jews are driven to extremity, that they may fly to the throne of grace for direction and deliverance. Their prayers were answered. Daniel received a revelation of the dream, and the signification of it, which he declared with great boldness before the king, who made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and he "sat in the gate of the king." Dan. ii. 49.

ORIENTAL GATE.

It would be wrong to pass over the modesty and humility of Daniel when he stood in the king's presence, and when all eyes were intent upon him, and all were eager to hear the mighty secret from his lips. Though young and eloquent, and conscious of his being able to declare exactly the utmost wish of Nebuchadnezzar, which no man upon earth besides himself could do, he takes care to renounce at the very beginning all pretence to superior sagacity; "As for me," says he, "this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart."

All genuine wisdom is humble and unassuming. They who are lifted up with a conceit of their great depth of knowledge, and extent of acquirements, may in the estimation of men be prodigies of intellectual powers, but in the judgment of truth they are not wise men, because they are ignorant of that essential point, that "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." Job xxviii. 28. The truly wise man knows that GOD is the fountain of wisdom, and therefore he will not arrogate to himself any merit for that which is only a gift and a talent bestowed on him, that it may be duly improved to the glory of the donor, and for the benefit of mankind.

The first care of Daniel, on being exalted to the government of Babylon, was to solicit the royal favor for his three friends, who were accordingly promoted to distinguished situations.

As a statesman, we know no more of Daniel than that he conducted himself with the greatest fidelity and openness. When consulted by the king his master upon another mysterious dream which troubled him, the prophet, though struck with grief and astonishment, freely declared its signification; and after predicting a severe judgment which would fall upon him for his impiety, he had the courage to give Nebuchadnezzar this advice: "Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; perhaps it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity." Such counsel following so mortifying a prophecy was not calculated to conciliate the good-will of a haughty tyrant, but Daniel was neither afraid to explain to Nebuchadnezzar the exact meaning of the dream, nor to declare to him the necessity of a thorough repentance. How the king of Babylon received the interpretation and advice of Daniel, is not told us; but as we find the prophet still in office under his successor Belshazzar, it is to be presumed that Nebuchadnezzar did not manifest his displeasure against him, though his mind was too elated to be guided by his advice. The prediction of Daniel was literally accomplished, for the king, being deprived of his reason, was driven from society, and became like a beast of the field. Daniel continued still in office after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, and displayed the same wisdom and uprightness in the service of Belshazzar as he had under his father.

This young monarch, in a season of festivity, surrounded by his parasites and concubines, sent for the holy vessels which his father had taken from the temple at Jerusalem, and prostituted them to the purposes of lawless riot and impious contempt. But while the company were indulging themselves in licentious mirth, the finger of GOD wrote the sentence of Belshazzar's destruction on the wall opposite to where he sat. The instant his eye caught the awful vision, and beheld the unknown characters which were traced out, his levity vanished, and his whole frame shook through fear. In vain were the magicians applied to, for not one of them could read the mysterious writing, or account for the tremendous apparition. Horrible confusion ran through the palace, when the queen-mother recollected the eminent qualities of Daniel, and communicated the information to her son. Daniel was instantly brought into the royal presence, and promised the highest honors and rewards on condition of his interpreting the portentous characters. The answer of the prophet shows the exalted sentiments of his mind: "Let thy gifts," says he, "be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation." He proceeded to remind the king of the signal judgment which had fallen upon his father for his impiety and pride; but by which remarkable lesson Belshazzar had not profited as he ought to have done. Daniel, in the midst of the sinful and perhaps intoxicated assembly, charged the king with the heinousness of his offence in thus profaning the holy vessels of GOD's sanctuary, and committing a daring act of rebellion against Heaven. Thus boldly did he prepare his guilty and terrified auditory for the tremendous secret contained in the few words which were written upon the wall

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST.

ENGRAVED FROM A DRAWING BY GUSTAVE DORE.

Belshazzar's Vision.

The words and the interpretation were these: "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN MENE; GOD hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." Daniel v. 25, &c.

This awful prediction was scarcely delivered before it was fulfilled; for on that same night the army of Cyrus, having turned the course of the river, entered the city, and put the king and the principal part of his nobility to the sword. Thus fell Babylon, agreeably to the exact words of the prophet Isaiah, who not only described the circumstance in the most accurate manner two hundred years before it came to pass, but even mentioned the conqueror Cyrus by name. See Isaiah xiii. *ad finem;* xiv 4—23; xxi. 2—10; xliii. 14—17; xlv. 1—3; xlvii. 1, &c.

In the book of Daniel it is said that the city was taken by Darius the Mede, which particular perhaps it will be necessary to explain. This Darius, then, was the uncle of Cyrus, and in his own right king of Media. Cyrus was a native of Persia, and brought an army of his countrymen to the assistance of his uncle, who made him general of the allied force at the siege of Babylon. When that place was taken by Cyrus, his uncle, as a reward of his valor, took him to be his coadjutor in the government; but as he was absent from Babylon some time in his Syrian, Egyptian, and other expeditions, the Scripture attributes the two first years from Belshazzar's death to Darius the Mede, and the succeeding years to Cyrus the Persian. Cyrus afterwards married the daughter of Darius, and thereby became the successor of that monarch in the kingdom of Media, and thus the Medes and Persians were united into one empire.

Darius and Cyrus, in settling the government of the conquered kingdom, divided it into one hundred and twenty provinces, over which were placed those persons who had rendered the most important services during the war. To regulate the conduct of these governors, a council was formed of three presidents, who resided constantly at court, and of these Daniel was the principal, which, though it showed the high opinion in which he was held for his wisdom and virtue, yet it exposed him to the envy of the courtiers, particularly of those who were placed beneath him in the council. To accomplish his destruction, various confederacies were formed, but when nothing could be found in his public conduct on which to frame an accusation against him, these malignant wretches devised the diabolical scheme of making his religious integrity a snare for his life. It was the uniform custom of this holy man, amidst the gayeties of the most splendid court, and the weighty cares of an extensive government, to "retire to his chamber, which looked towards Jerusalem, and to pray upon his knees three times every day." Daniel vi. 10. What a reflection is this upon those persons who scarcely ever bend their knees to the Father of mercies at all! Daniel looked towards Jerusalem, doubtless with a tender concern at her forlorn condition, and at the captive state of her children; but though this called forth his most fervent supplications to the ALMIGHTY that he would be pleased to "remember his inheritance," yet he on these occasions "gave thanks," as knowing "that all things work together for good to them that love GOD." The pious soul, however broken and dismayed it may be, finds still abundant cause for praise and thanksgiving, and with its penitential confessions and earnest supplications, will mix ascriptions of gratitude to GOD "as aforetime."

The enemies of Daniel were obliged to have recourse to a very artful scheme to accomplish their purpose, for such was the high opinion entertained of him by the king, that a direct attack against him would only have brought the royal vengeance upon their own heads. They therefore proposed a decree to Darius, that whoever should ask a petition of either god or man for thirty days, except of the king, should be cast into the den of lions. Darius was flattered by a proposal which raised him above all the Babylonish deities, and this incense offered to his vanity made him blind to the real object of these hypocritical parasites. The decree was signed, and made, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, irrevocable. Daniel knew nothing of this plot till it was carried into effect; but instead of being moved by it, or making a secret of his devotions, he continued his wonted practice, in which he was soon discovered by his adversaries. The report was quickly laid before the king, who saw too late into what a dreadful error he had fallen by hearkening to the impious proposition of these men, who now showed that it was their own envy they wished to gratify and not the advancement of his honor. He endeavored to save his faithful minister but the edict could not be reversed. Daniel was accordingly cast into the den of lions,

ANCIENT PERSIAN SOLDIERS.

which was carefully closed up and sealed with the royal signet. But the fierceness of these terrible creatures was restrained by the angel of the LORD, so that when the king hastened in the morning to the den, Daniel "was found unhurt, because he believed in his GOD." Daniel vi. 23.

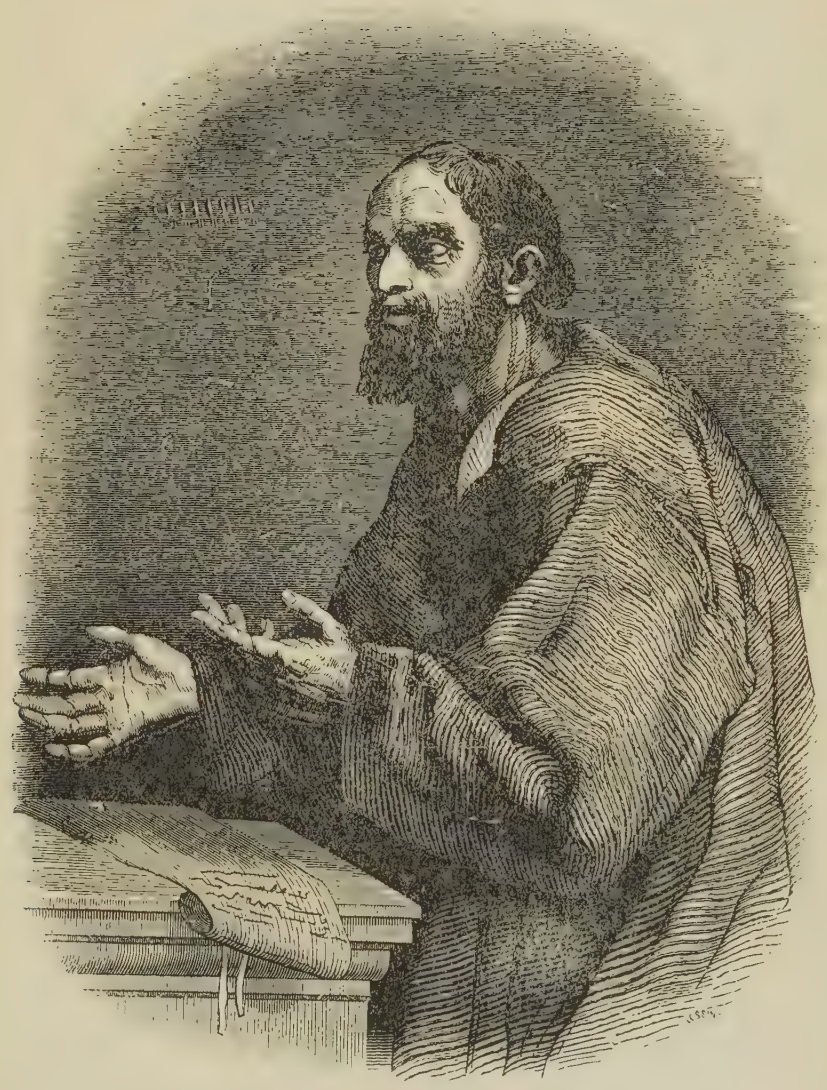
The miraculous deliverance of Daniel was the triumph of the true religion; for the king, after causing the conspirators to be cast into the same den, where they were instantly destroyed, issued a decree acknowledging the "GOD of Daniel to be the living GOD and steadfast for ever." It appears also most probable that this paved the way for the deliverance of the Jews from their captivity, an event which lay much upon the mind of Daniel, as is evident from his prayers and confessions to GOD, and the glorious visions which were revealed to him for his comfort. Though exalted to such a pitch of honor in the court of Babylon, and though engaged in managing the concerns of a mighty empire, we see this great man humbling himself before the LORD "in sackcloth and ashes" for the redemption of his afflicted countrymen. He still remembered desolate Jerusalem in the midst of the distinctions with which he was covered by the greatest potentates on earth. And shall not the Christian, while he sojourns in a strange land, think upon the church of GOD, and pray for her increase and consummation? Amidst vanity and corruption, the opposition of enemies and the treachery of false friends, he "looks towards the heavenly Jerusalem," and like Daniel, "who was a man of desires," sighs for his native home, the city of the living GOD. This exalted statesman lived much in the habit of prayer, and by thus keeping in close communion with GOD, he was eminently preserved in times of great difficulty and in the most critical situations. His integrity was often proved, and his faith was strengthened. His enemies were confounded, and the people of GOD were relieved, and at length completely emancipated by his means. So great was the honor put upon Daniel, that the special messengers of the Most High were not only sent to cheer his desponding mind by prophetic representations of what should happen in succeeding times, but one of them addressed him with this compellation: "O man greatly beloved!" Daniel x. 19.

Of these wonderful visions we have not room to speak particularly; and therefore it must suffice to say, that his descriptions of the four great monarchies of the world were so exact, that the greatest enemies of Christianity have acknowledged it, though against all truth they pretend that the predictions were composed after all the events were closed. This is then a most glorious testimony in behalf of revelation, since its fiercest and acutest adversaries are forced to adopt a most absurd falsehood to get rid of its force. The famous prophecy of Daniel's seventy weeks, in which he accurately fixed the period "when everlasting righteousness should be brought in," (Dan. ix. 24,) is also of the utmost importance, as it not only establishes the truth of revelation against infidels, but ascertains beyond a doubt the coming of the MESSIAH.

Some writers assert that Daniel died in the beginning of Cyrus's reign at Babylon; but it is more probable that he died at Shushan, or Susa, in Persia, where, according to Josephus, remained in his time a magnificent tower erected by the prophet, and which by his description of it was a beautiful specimen of architectural taste.

But in the life and example of Daniel we have something more valuable to admire than his skill either as a man of science or as a minister of state. From childhood he was a pattern of religious consistency and firmness. No honors or allurements, threats or artifices, could alienate him from the path of duty. Though ready on all occasions to serve his royal masters, yet he was careful to "preserve a conscience void of offence," and to serve his GOD as well as the king.

He always declared the truth boldly, but without arrogance, in the presence of the haughtiest monarchs, nor once endeavored to disguise or palliate the unpleasant tidings which he was commissioned to reveal to them. His enemies could find "no occasion of fault against him, except his integrity in keeping the law of his GOD;" which course he pursued, though in the very face of death, and in opposition to the royal commandment. From his honesty, humility, piety, and courage, let us learn to resist the temptations of the world, and to live in all holy obedience to the laws of GOD, and in a constant habit of communion with him by faith and prayer. This will procure us more honor than the approbation of princes, for it will gain us the favor of GOD, and secure to us an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."



SACKCLOTH.

MORDECAI AND ESTHER.

ESTHER AND MORDECAI.

FLOURISHED ABOUT THE YEAR OF THE WORLD, 3544.

NO scheme formed against the CHURCH of GOD will prosper. The wicked are oftentimes snared in their own devices, and the plot which they contrive for the ruin of others frequently proves the ruin of themselves. At certain periods of the world's history the overthrow of Christianity has appeared inevitable: but at the very moment when the machinations of its adversaries were brought to the most powerful pitch, and when all hope of deliverance was gone, the divine arm was made bare, joy filled the habitations of the righteous, and the tents of wickedness were covered with confusion. Many such instances are recorded for our comfort and edification, that we may learn to put our whole trust in GOD when things are the most against us, and to rely firmly upon the veracity of His promises, even in seasons of the greatest confusion, calamity, and darkness.

In the story of Esther we are presented with a beautiful and instructive illustration of this great truth, that though the ALMIGHTY may for a season permit the wicked to triumph, yet he will eventually turn his wickedness upon his own head, and deliver the righteous out of all his troubles.

The Jews were scattered as captives throughout Persia in the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, who is justly concluded to have been the Ahasuerus king of Persia, mentioned in this part of Scripture.

This monarch, on some extraordinary occasion, gave a sumptuous entertainment in his palace at Shushan to his princes and nobles, which lasted one hundred and eighty days. To increase the festivity, or rather to gratify his own vanity, he sent for his queen Vashti to grace the banquet with her presence. This mandate she refused to obey; which so provoked the king, who was already heated with wine, that he consulted with his company what steps he should adopt to punish the insult. The pliant courtiers, who saw that it would be more acceptable to inflame than to allay his resentment, proposed a divorce. Their advice was taken, and Vashti being discarded, Esther was elevated to the high station of queen of Persia. With this part of the conduct of the king we have nothing to do; our attention is upon a more interesting subject. We behold here the wonder-working finger of God bringing good to his afflicted people out of the pride, resentment, and intemperance of their oppressors. Esther was an orphan Jewess, left to the care of her cousin Mordecai, by whom she was religiously brought up, and whose kindness she returned by the most dutiful attention, "doing nothing but by his commandment," (ch. ii. 20,) or according to the directions which she had received from him, even after her advancement.

Among all the virgins that were presented to the king, Esther was the only one that fixed his affections, and on her he caused the vacant crown to be placed with great pomp and rejoicings. If this election proved of importance to the Jewish nation, it was no less advantageous to the king; for, at the time of the nuptial feast, Mordecai discovered a design which had been formed against the life of the monarch

by two discontented courtiers, who were, in consequence of his report, apprehended and put to death. The good Mordecai, however, was not anxious to obtain any distinctions for himself through his connexions with the queen. On the contrary, by his advice she concealed the knowledge of her kindred from her consort. For this conduct a very sufficient reason may be assigned. The debased condition of the Jews might have prejudiced the mind of the king against his new partner, had he known she belonged to that despised people before he was well acquainted with her good qualities. Mordecai was content with having discharged his trust to his cousin and ward; and left the issue of this extraordinary change in her condition to the disposal of Heaven.

Another cause for this silence, perhaps, was this: as Haman, the prime minister of Persia, and the great favorite of the king, was a descendant of the Amalekites, a people who had always a rooted animosity against Israel, his influence upon the mind of his master might have proved prejudicial to the queen and to her friends.

So great, indeed, was the ascendency which this Haman had over the king, that he not only obtained the government of the empire, but, by a royal edict, all persons were commanded to do him homage. We are not told whether this act included anything like idolatrous respect, but some scruple of a conscientious kind operated upon Mordecai, and he omitted to pay the accustomed reverence to this pageant of royal favor. The station of Mordecai was at the gate of the palace, and therefore his neglect was the sooner noticed by the rest of the attendants, who, to ingratiate themselves with the minister, informed him of the contemptuous behavior of this captive Jew. The base mind of Haman was instantly filled with wrath; but instead of examining and punishing the offender, he meditated at once the utter extirpation of the whole Jewish race. Being as superstitious as he was sanguinary, Haman had recourse to divination by lot, to determine on the fittest time and means for putting his abominable design into execution. This delayed the scheme, and afforded an opportunity of totally defeating it. After wearying himself, probably, with attending to various devices, Haman ventured to propose a massacre of the Jews to the king, alleging that they were a perverse and seditious people, who, by their numbers and disposition, were dangerous to the state. To recommend his proposal still more, he made an offer of greatly enriching the royal treasury by the spoils which would be obtained. The king, though he put too great a confidence in his infamous servant, was not to be swayed by mercenary motives, and thinking that Haman acted herein from the pure principles of loyalty and patriotism, he consented to the measure, and gave him a grant of the plunder.

The weak conduct of the Persian monarch, in so readily yielding his consent to a horrible massacre, without thoroughly inquiring into the case and character of the devoted people, deserves the deepest reprobation. A truly generous and discerning mind would, on the suggestion of so dreadful an act, have looked upon the man who recommended it with jealousy, if not with abhorrence: but such was the predominance of this wicked minister over the king, that he obtained without difficulty the inhuman edict, which devoted thousands of men, women, and children, on a day therein appointed, to destruction, because one of their people had neglected to pay him profound reverence. After signing and sealing this horrible instrument, the king and Haman made themselves merry with wine.

While intemperance reigned in the palace, consternation prevailed through the city, particularly among the poor people who were doomed to destruction. Mordecai was filled with sorrow, and covered himself with sackcloth and ashes, which being reported to the queen, she sent a messenger to him with change of apparel, and to inquire into the reason of his uncommon grief. Her concern was not less than his, when the messenger brought an account of the intended massacre. But though she was extremely anxious to exert her interest in behalf of her devoted friends, yet there was an alarming impediment which appeared to prevent the possibility of success. By the laws of Persia, it was death for any one, even the royal consort, to enter the king's presence uncalled by him, unless he should graciously extend his royal sceptre to the intruder. Of this circumstance, Esther gave Mordecai information; but he replied, that no fears for herself ought to hinder her from mediating in behalf of her nation: and he observed, for her encouragement, that her advancement was probably ordered by Providence for the express purpose that she should be the instrument of saving the people of God. This at once brought the queen to a resolution of making an offering

of herself in the cause of her countrymen. But she would not undertake it without religious preparation. She put on sackcloth and fasted three days, in which respect her example was readily followed by all the Jews in Shushan.

When the days of fasting were ended, the queen, attired in her royal robes, ventured into the presence of the king, whose heart was affected at her approach, and he instantly extended the sceptre of peace towards her. By a transition not improper, may we not consider this beautiful incident as representing the KING OF GLORY and his redeemed church? Banished from his presence by sin, it would have been death for mortal man to approach his mansion, unless the golden sceptre of peace and mercy were extended from the throne. The doom of endless misery was pronounced upon us all, through the machinations of Satan, our infernal adversary and accuser, but a MEDIATOR devoted himself in our stead, and interposed between us and destruction. The head of the church hath appeared for us in the presence of the divine Majesty; grace was poured into his lips; he prevailed for the wretched captives; and therefore the sounds of joy, instead of lamentation, arise from their dwellings, and the destroyer hath fallen into his own pit.

The king, surprised at Esther's appearance, and thinking that something extraordinary must have been the occasion of it, anticipated any petition she might have to present, by freely offering whatever she should ask, even to the half of his kingdom. Not thinking it prudent to urge her request immediately, she only solicited the company of the king and Haman at a banquet, which she had prepared for them that day. This was readily complied with, and at her request, another visit was appointed for the day following.

An honor so unexpected and distinguished, elated the mind of Haman beyond all bounds; so that when he went home he collected his friends together, that he might have the pleasure of relating it to them. But what earthly satisfaction is without its alloy? And what honor is there without mortification? The proud and vengeful mind of Haman, though wonderfully delighted with the favor of his master, and the condescension of the queen, could not overlook the disrespect with which he was treated by an insignificant Jew: "Yet all this," says he, "availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." Ch. v. 13. Should the wicked man have honors and riches heaped upon him beyond measure, still let but a harmless reptile, a feeble worm, offend him, and he is miserable. His mind is irritated, and the venom of malice and envy diffuses a deadly poison over all his enjoyments, and imbitters every pleasure.

The advice of Haman's friends, to put Mordecai to death, was greedily swallowed by him, though he had already fixed the day for the utter extirpation of the Jewish people throughout the empire. But there was something peculiarly gratifying to his malice in making Mordecai a more conspicuous example than the rest; and therefore, at the instigation of his counsellors, he caused a gallows to be erected fifty feet high, not entertaining a doubt but that, by his influence with the king, he should obtain an order for the execution. But while he was thus felicitating himself in the assurance of Mordecai's fate, Providence was accomplishing the destruction of his schemes and the advancement of the man whom he hated.

On that very night, when Haman was erecting a gallows for Mordecai, the king was so disturbed that he could not sleep. In this restless state he commanded the records of the kingdom to be read to him, and when the circumstance of Mordecai's discovery of the conspiracy was related, the king immediately inquired what reward had been conferred on him for his loyalty? Being told that nothing had been done for the man, he was resolved to atone for the neglect, and inquired who was in wait

AN EASTERN PRINCE SEATED UPON HIS DIVAN.

ESTHER DENOUNCING HAMAN.

Engraved from a Drawing by Gustave Dore.

ing At that moment Haman was in attendance to solicit the king's warrant for the execution of Mordecai. He also could not sleep, for thoughts of revenge disturbed his rest. Early, therefore, does he hasten to court, that he may procure the death of an honest man, who had too much integrity to court his favor by servility. On entering the royal presence, a question was put to him, which could not but mislead his perverted mind. "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?" were the first sounds that fell upon the ear of Haman as he bowed before the throne. Could the ambitious statesman entertain an idea, after all the favors he had recently received, that there was a man in the kingdom whom the king delighted to honor except himself? It was natural for him to suppose that the infatuated Ahasuerus was devising some new and more public mark of favor to bestow upon his favorite. Possessed of this idea, he instantly proposed that the person whom the king intended to honor should be conducted in a triumphal manner through the city.

The advice was extravagant enough; but Haman, being fully satisfied that no other person than himself was intended, determined that nothing should be wanting to render his glory dazzling in the eyes of the people. What must have been the disappointment, the horror and anguish of Haman, when he was ordered instantly to see these distinctions conferred upon Mordecai, and to attend the procession as a servant.

Thus the mighty fabric of ambition fell with a mighty crash; Haman's schemes were blasted as if by a sudden flash from heaven; his envy, malice, and revenge all turned inward upon his own heart, and rendered his misery complete.

The mandate of Ahasuerus must be obeyed; Haman leads in the procession, and proclaims aloud the praises of the very Mordecai for whom a few hours before he had prepared a gibbet.

Haman was lamenting his disgrace in the midst of his family, when he was called to the royal entertainment. This mark of distinction, probably, served in some degree to alleviate his disappointment, and, therefore, smothering his chagrin, he hastened to the palace. But the storm was now gathered to a pitch, and Haman had scarcely begun to compose himself, when the queen stated her case, and that of her devoted people, to the king, in such pathetic terms, that his anger was kindled, and he immediately demanded who had projected their ruin. From this we may well infer that when Haman obtained the decree against the Jews, he had taken advantage of the king's intemperance. Ahasuerus appears to have forgotten the circumstance, otherwise he would hardly have asked who the author of the abominable project was; and as he and Haman at that time were "drinking wine," we may well suppose that this villanous minister contrived first to stupify the senses of his master, and then easily procured his signature to the bloody proclamation. To what dreadful evils does intemperance lead mankind; and to what shocking impositions are not even persons of good dispositions liable by giving way to a habit of drunkenness! This led the king of Persia to an implicit confidence in the treacherous Haman, and that artful minister, knowing his master's propensity, encouraged him in it to promote his own vile purposes. When Ahasuerus was made acquainted with the villany of his favorite, he rose from the table in great wrath, and retired into the garden. Haman, finding matters running violently against him, fell on his face on the bed or couch where the queen sat, to supplicate his life through her intercession. He was in this posture when the king entered, who, supposing that he had meant some violence to the queen's person, ordered him to be executed on the very gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai.

Thus fell Haman into the very snare which he had laid for another, and all his honors and estates were transferred to the Jew for whom he had prepared an ignominious death that very morning.

The decree against the Jews still remained in force, nor was it in the power of the king, according to the Persian laws, to revoke it. But at the earnest solicitations of the queen he issued another proclamation, empowering the Jews to defend themselves against their enemies; and such was the influence of it, that numbers came to their assistance, so that they easily vanquished all who rose against them. In commemoration of this providential deliverance the Jews observe a yearly festival, which is called the feast of Purim, or "the feast of lots," in allusion to Haman's having consulted by lot on the means and time to effect their destruction. This feast is celebrated on the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month Adar, which month answers to our Febru-

ary and March; but on the thirteenth they observe a fast to commemorate the day fixed for their extirpation.

Let us learn from this history the truth of the doctrine of a particular Providence. The continual care which GOD exercises over the affairs of the world is a source of the greatest comfort to the true Christian. For whatever may occur, whether he is prosperous or distressed as to temporal good; whether there be wars and tumults, or peace and quiet, in his time; whatever, in short, be the aspect of events, he is sure that they are all ordered and directed according to the counsels of Infinite Wisdom. And this superintendence embraces all classes of persons, and all kinds of circumstances. For the wrath of wicked men is made to praise GOD; and not one sparrow falleth to the ground without his authority. Those, therefore, who love him, to whom he has promised that everything shall work together for good, have the strongest reason to repose at all times their implicit confidence in him. "I have set the LORD always before me," says David; "because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."

There are many, however, who entertain strong objections to this doctrine of a particular providence. They allow that on what they call great occasions the power of the Deity may interfere; but they consider it unnecessary, they sometimes call it irreverent, to appeal to his care as upholding and ruling *all* things. Ordinary events they seem to think may be safely left to themselves; these will run in a regular course, and need no superintending mind.

But surely the principles on which such men argue are very erroneous. For how is it possible to admit the distinction, which *we* make between great and little, in the sight of GOD? All things in the world are to him upon a level. And just as to a man who looks down into crowded streets from a lofty steeple, the difference of stature of the passing crowds is unperceived—so, infinitely more indeed, to Him who sitteth upon the circle of the earth, all the inhabitants thereof are but as grasshoppers; to regard the highest of whom is an inconceivable condescension, which the concerns of the meanest stretch only a little, a very little, more. A prince, in fact, is not of more consequence than a peasant with Him who has expressly declared himself to be no respecter of persons. And, indeed, we are apt to estimate the relative importance of individuals and events by a very false standard. GOD looks upon them with other eyes. He deems the welfare of one of his poorest people, whom the world overlooks more precious than the fortunes of a destroying conqueror. We know that just Lot, whom the inhabitants of his city vexed and persecuted, was an object of greater care to the LORD than the multitudinous population of wicked Sodom, with all her pomp and pageantry.

Besides, it frequently happens that what we call great events depend on very trifling circumstances. The finest links may unite the different parts of the most ponderous chain. Many illustrations of this fact occur both in sacred and profane history. We see one in the narrative before us. A proud courtier of the Persian king takes affront because a Jewish exile will not bow to him. Can anything appear of less importance than this? And yet from such an inadequate source arose the determination of Haman, which he had well-nigh put into practice, to destroy the whole nation of the Jews. A monarch, again, passes a disturbed night, and to compose his mind orders his attendants to read to him the chronicles of his reign. What result could be expected from this? And yet this recitation revives the memory of an important service rendered him by Mordecai, which is a principal link in the ruin of Haman and the consequent deliverance of the destined victims. It is not, therefore, for us to say what is a great event and what is not. The seed may be very small, and yet there may spring from it a plant growing in time into a magnificent tree.

The mightiest events, too—the rise and fall of empires, the destruction or regeneration of nations—are usually the aggregate of many inferior occurrences. If, therefore, you strike out several or even one of these, you derange the whole machinery, and disappoint the intended result. For if GOD orders the whole of anything, he must order all its parts; and if one part be excepted from his sway, or be left out in his counsels, a disturbing element is introduced, which might frustrate his purposes and derange the universe. And thus, as every great event is the result of a long train of smaller ones, if these last be neglected, the whole could not be said to be under the authority of GOD. So that when it is asserted that it is enough to attribute to him the grand consummation of things, while the circumstances that tend thereto are overlooked, the

reasoning is the same as if it were recommended to a husbandman to mind only the time of harvest, while the preparatory ploughing and sowing were forgotten.

The analogy of nature proves the peculiar care of GOD for little things. It is remarkable that the minuter creatures, which we might think of least account, seem to have been the especial objects of creative care. If we would have the fullest proofs of contrivance, we shall go to the world of insects, and there, as every naturalist can tell us, we find a wisdom, and skill, and delicate curiosity of workmanship, far less prominently displayed in animals of greater bulk. The conclusion then is evident. If there is this care of the most insignificant beings in creation, we may fairly infer that in the ordinary dealings of his providence none of the concerns of the lowliest man are disregarded.

The real source of men's denying to GOD the full government of all things, is an unworthy conception of his power: it is because they would bring down his omnipotence to the level of their own weakness. They have a notion that sovereignty is a weight to him, and the upholding of the universe a labor. They forget that his eye penetrates everywhere without exertion; that his voice has only to speak, and it is done; his will to command, and it stands fast. *We* may be dizzied and distracted with the whirl of business: we may be unable to ascend to all that is vast, and to stoop to all that is little: we may fail to grasp the immensity of space, and to comprehend the niceties of animated nature;—but is GOD to be crippled by the measure of man? As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts. He holds all that he has made in the hollow of his hand: his vigilance is everywhere present to watch; his power to work; and every wheel in the mighty machine knows his voice, and stands still, or moves onward, at his mere volition.

If, indeed, GOD govern not all the concerns of the universe, it must be either for lack of power, or for want of will. No man, perhaps, who believes there is a GOD, will deliberately deny his ability; and as respects his will, let it be remembered that all the minute provisions of the Jewish law, all the ornaments of the tabernacle and the temple, were described and commanded by GOD, with a distinctness of enumeration which condescended to every particular. Who, after this, will say that he chooses not to concern himself with the concerns of his creatures? Be it recollected, also, that our SAVIOUR, when instructing his disciples on this very point, assured them that the hairs of their head were numbered, and deduced an argument from the care which had decked the lilies of the field, to the watchful superintendence which would certainly provide for them.

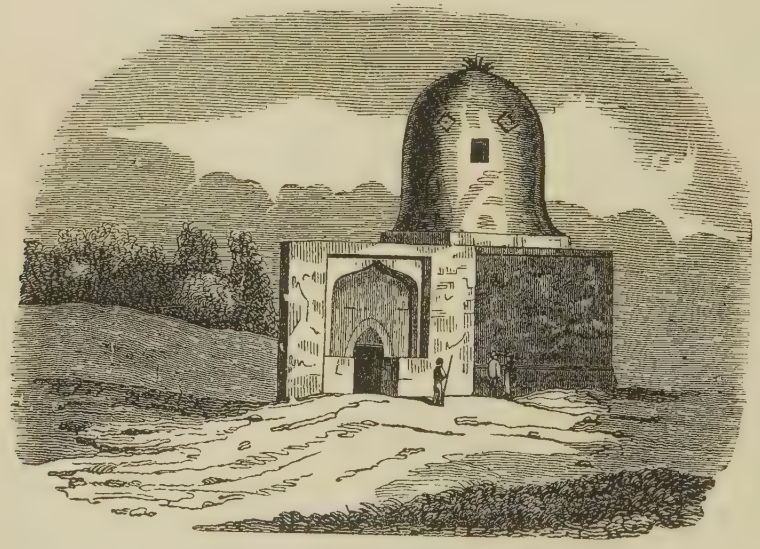
The most wonderful part of this universal government is, that it is exercised over intelligent creatures: they are left to act according to their respective dispositions, and yet the hand of GOD, without putting any force upon them, so as to deprive them of moral agency, moulds and fashions the heterogeneous mass of conflicting principles—inasmuch as evil has broken in upon a universe created good—into a sure result of glory to his great name. He directs the living wheels, when they know not that they are doing his work, and brings out the ultimate prosperity and happiness of his faithful people. And this is the happy confidence which they may repose in him. No event befalls them unlooked-for or beyond his wise purpose; if trials come, they are such as he permits for the better proving of their faith; if enemies rise up against them, he provides them with the means of successful resistance; if they are persecuted they are not forsaken—cast down, they shall not be destroyed.

Surely, nothing can so persuasively invite us to diligent exertion in the cause of godliness. If it is true that his eye is ever on us, we may act as knowing that our "labor shall not be in vain in the LORD." If his care ministers to our minutest necessities, we must gratefully yield ourselves to him who *so* has loved us. It is the affection that a parent shows towards a beloved child, which that child will repay with simple trust and ready obedience. How blessed to be brought into such a union with GOD through JESUS CHRIST! And let worldly, irreligious men reflect, that their paths are equally observed, their lives equally under the Divine authority. Only, as in the one case his government is administered for the welfare of his people, so, in the other, it is directed to the vindication of his justice on his enemies.

In this story we may also perceive the wisdom and goodness of GOD in counteracting the evil designs of ambitious men against his church. It exhibits also the pernicious nature and consequences of an envious spirit. The fall of Haman and the ad

vancement of Mordecai show that the path of the wicked is slippery, and terminates in shame and destruction, while that of the righteous, though obscure and rugged for a time, is sure and honorable, "and shineth more and more," or becometh more glorious, "unto the perfect day."

That day is hastening on apace in which the triumph of the wicked shall cease for ever; and when the despised, poor, and afflicted children of God shall be raised on high, to the confusion of all their enemies. Their accuser and adversary, with his associates, shall be turned into the pit of destruction, and "then shall the redeemed of the Lord return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." Isaiah li. 11.



Tomb of Mordecai and Esther.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

BEHEADED IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 31.

THE Old and New Testaments are closely connected, as parts of the same plan, which mutually confirm and illustrate each other.* Both are derived from the same divine original; and therefore there can be no opposition between them. But without detracting from the authority or excellence of the more ancient Scriptures, we may assert that the New Testament claims our peculiar regard, as containing the clearest and most interesting revelation ever delivered to mankind, and exhibiting the completion of the great design, which had been in some measure made known from the beginning. Salvation was published to Adam immediately after the fall; and in every succeeding age intimations were given, that redemption should be accomplished. Yet much obscurity rested on all these various dispensations, till it pleased GOD to disperse the darkness by the full manifestation of his grace through JESUS CHRIST.

It is well known that just before the dawn of day the darkness is at its greatest pitch, and that the air is much colder than at any other time. In this state the morning star "sheds his beams" with peculiar lustre, and appears to call slumbering mortals to welcome the approach of day. But there are few who heed the invitation, or can bring themselves to renounce their downy luxury for the fragrant incense of the morning. A deeper torpidity then seizes the faculties, and it requires a strong degree of resolution to get the better of the pleasing lassitude.

Such was the moral condition of the world when the day of human redemption, so variously prefigured, and so often predicted, was about to break, and the "Sun of righteousness to arise with healing in his wings." Mal. ii. 2.

In the Jewish church there was a deadness to spiritual objects; gross darkness was spread out over all its services; priests and people, generally speaking, were insensible to the life of religion, had unworthy notions of GOD's word, and were, moreover, either sunk into a Sadducean infidelity, or the Pharisaic superstition.

In that dark and insensible state did the harbinger of the day of grace arise, and call a sleeping world to repentance, and to a due reception of Him who was to disperse the clouds of doubt and error, and to "bring life and immortality to light by his blessed gospel." 2 Tim. i. 10.

There were, however, some even in that gloomy state who "waited for the consolation of Israel." Among these were Zacharias and Elisabeth, the parents of the Baptist. He was "a priest of the course of Abia;" she was "of the daughters of Aaron," and "they were both righteous before GOD, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the LORD blameless." Luke i. 1, 2.

These religious Israelites, it is observed, "had no child, because that Elisabeth was

* The two Testaments may be fitly resembled to the double doors of the Temple, one whereof enfolded another. The Old is the New enfolded; the New is the Old explicated. For there are above two hundred and sixty places of the Old Testament cited in the New; so that in almost every needful point the harmony is expressed.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

barren, and they were both well stricken in years." They "who stand highest in the favor of GOD," says an admirable writer, "may, during the greatest part of their lives, want the external and visible marks of it, and lie under the burden of 'reproach among men,' as was the case of childless women in Judea. But these two pious persons, when their condition seemed desperate, were upon the eve of felicity. For of parents at their time of life, John was to be born, that so the miraculous manner of his birth might excite the attention of mankind, and dispose them to listen to his voice when it should be heard in the wilderness; and also that it might prepare them for that great event which was taking place, as the prophet Isaiah had foretold, 'a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.'"

As Zacharias was officiating in the temple "in the order of the course, and according to the custom," a heavenly messenger stood before him, whose appearance filled him with terror. There is something awful even in the contemplation of the celestial world, and of those pure spirits who minister before the throne of GOD: but what must it be to hold communion with them, especially in this state of weakness and imperfection? Eliphaz, in Job, when describing an apparition which came on purpose to correct his notions of Providence, tells us what an impression it had upon him: "fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up." Job iv. 14, 15.

Now these heavenly messengers came on purposes of love to man, without assuming any of those appearances calculated to excite terror and dismay in the beholder. What then will it be when they shall descend to execute the divine vengeance upon the guilty? Who will stand undaunted when the flaming ministers of wrath shall call mankind to the bar of GOD, and execute his sentence upon all the workers of evil? If the most pious men have been seized with fear when favored with a heavenly vision, let us tremble in the consideration that the angels are constantly around us, and observe all the evil actions we commit, and record all the vain words that we utter.

> "Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
> Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep."—MILTON.

When the angel saw the agitation which his appearance had occasioned in the mind of Zacharias, he bade him not to "fear," for that he was come to declare to him the divine favor, and to promise him a son by his wife Elisabeth, whom he should call John, and who should "go before the LORD in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the LORD." Luke i. 17.

Zacharias, though a descendant of Abraham, had not Abraham's faith. The patriarch believed the promise, "though against hope," but this good priest staggered at the declaration made by an angel at the altar of GOD, and had the temerity to ask for a sign by which he should know whether it would come to pass, "seeing he was an old man, and his wife well stricken in years." His demand, indeed, was complied with, but it was as a punishment for his unbelief. He was struck speechless, and in that state he remained till the day that the promised child was circumcised, at which ceremony the tongue which had been so long silent was loosened; and Zacharias, being filled with the Holy Ghost, delivered a sublime hymn, in which he celebrates the praises of GOD for "remembering his holy covenant." After describing in the most energetic terms the blessings to attend the coming of the MESSIAH, the transported father thus addressed his infant son:—"And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the LORD to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people for the remission of their sins." Luke i. 16, 17.

Of the early part of the Baptist's life we have scarcely any information. It is only observed, that "he grew, and waxed strong in the spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." Luke i. 80.

There is an ancient tradition that his mother Elisabeth, hearing of the massacre of the infants at Bethlehem, fled with her child into the wilderness, where she died soon after; and that his father was put to death in the temple, by the command of Herod, for refusing to discover the place where his son was concealed. To confirm this, some old commentators will have it that this was the Zacharias whom our LORD mentions as having been slain between the porch and the altar, but of this there is no sufficient proof.

Though consecrated from the womb to the ministerial office, John did not enter upon it in the heat of youth, but after several years spent in solitude and in a course of self-

THE HIGH PRIEST IN THE TEMPLE.

denial. He had gained the conquest of his own passions, and was mortified to all the temptations and enjoyments of the world, before he came out to preach repentance to others. Divine knowledge is not to be acquired in the busy scenes of life, amidst the noise of folly, the clamor of parties, the confusion of opinions, and the allurements of vice. In the world we may learn much of what concerns the world, much of what is generally admired and sought after; but if we would gain spiritual wisdom, if we would obtain the mastery of our passions, and an habitual love of holiness, we must, at least, occasionally retire from the world "to commune with our own hearts and be still."

Various and striking are the prophetical descriptions of the Baptist in the Old Testament. That by Isaiah is so direct, that no man except a most obstinate infidel can deny its application: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our GOD." Isaiah xl. 3. The voice which thus sounded in the prophet's ears before it was really heard upon the earth was that of the Baptist, who, at a proper season, was sent to dispose the hearts and affections of men for the reception of the SAVIOUR when he should make his appearance.

Malachi has the following remarkable prediction: "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." That this was meant of John the Baptist we have the testimony of our LORD himself, who declared to his disciples, "Elias is indeed come," and to the Jews, "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come." Matt. xi. 13, 14.

The same prophet Malachi hath another evident prediction of the coming of MESSIAH and of John: "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts." Mal. iii. 1.

The Jews fell into a strange error from a misconstruction of this prophet, by conceiving that the real Elijah should descend from heaven before the advent of MESSIAH. But it is common in prophetic language to compare one person with another by giving to him the same name; thus CHRIST himself is called David, not that he was to be that very man, but him whom David represented: and John is called Elijah, because he was to be like him "in spirit and in power."

When he was thoroughly prepared for his great work, John received his commission to enter the busy world, and to call sinners to repentance. He was then thirty years old, which was also the age of our SAVIOUR when he entered upon his office, and was consecrated by the Spirit at his baptism.

The appearance and the manners of the Baptist when he first came out into the world excited general attention.

His clothing was mean, being of camels' hair bound round him with a leathern girdle

THE GIRDLE.

and his food consisted of "locusts and wild honey." Matt. iii. 4. We are not hence to infer that the ministers of religion are to imitate John in the rigid austerity of his life, any more than in the eremitical state which preceded it. But the conduct of John affords an admirable lesson, and teaches us that no man can be a proper or a useful preacher of the gospel, whose own life does not comport with the doctrines he delivers, and the precepts which he inculcates.

The message which John declared was authoritative, as became one who had received a commission from above: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Repentance, or a change of mind, and an amendment of life, must precede the establishment of CHRIST'S kingdom in the heart. The love of the world must be taken away, with every inordinate desire and affection, before the heart can be in a proper condition to receive the graces of the Spirit, which flow from faith in the REDEEMER.

John began, like a wise master-builder, to lay his foundation deep in mortification and self-denial before he proclaimed the approach of the MESSIAH. In like manner no sinner should be encouraged to make the promises and consolations of the gospel his own, who has not given unequivocal signs of a renovated mind, by "turning from the wickedness which he hath committed, and doing that which is lawful and right." It is an error that places all Christianity in sentimental persuasion, or in a mere inward experience of the operations of grace without the fruits of holiness being manifested in our lives and conversations. Our SAVIOUR, in all his discourses and parables, inculcated a very different doctrine, and plainly declared that genuine righteousness must be exhibited in a holy life and conversation. It is "by their fruits" that we are taught to judge of men who pretend to religion. We are also taught to judge of ourselves in the same way, for the faith which does not naturally lead us to good works is a deceitful notion; and though a man may flatter himself that he hath the full assurance of that which is necessary to salvation, yet if it does not purify his mind, and regulate his actions, according to the gospel precepts, he is at a distance from the kingdom of heaven.

It is of great importance that every one should have clear and distinct views on the nature of true repentance. No subject, however, is more commonly perverted and misunderstood. In reference to this, and all other portions of divine truth, we know, indeed, that "the natural man receiveth them not: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." But still there *is* a knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity, a theoretical knowledge, which all are able to obtain, and which often, with the divine blessing, becomes a step or means to the attainment of experimental, saving knowledge, whereby the soul is benefited, and made partaker of eternal life. Repentance may be defined to be in general, *a change of mind, wishing something to be undone that is done.* But this does not by any means convey to us the full meaning of Gospel repentance; of that repentance which, the apostle tells us is not to be repented of. Judas's repentance was in strict accordance with the above definition. And so, also, we may suppose, is the repentance exercised in that doleful region where there is "weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth"—a change of mind, working death, not life; deeper ruin, not salvation. Repentance unto life is, first of all, the gift of God. It does not spring up naturally in the human heart; nor is it the consequence of any particular state or combination of natural feelings and passions; but it comes from above. "Him," our LORD JESUS CHRIST, "hath GOD exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a SAVIOUR, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Again; "GOD also to the Gentiles hath granted repentance unto life." And, to mention one passage more: "If peradventure GOD will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." We should observe, perhaps, here, that in the economy of human redemption, GOD the Father appoints, GOD the Son executes, and GOD the Holy Spirit receives of GOD the Son for particular application. Thus, GOD appointed and commissioned his Son JESUS to give repentance to his chosen people; but it was, and still is, the blessed Spirit who receives of the things of CHRIST, and shows them unto the believer's soul. John xvi. 14.

Among the characteristics of true repentance, a very striking one is this, that it has respect chiefly to the Divine honor. Though the penitent realizes in his experience all the fearful apprehensions of the convinced sinner; though the dreadful punishment of sin, in time and through eternity, is present to his thoughts to afflict and dismay him; yet all this is as nothing compared with what he feels when he considers and views his sins as committed against GOD. It is this consideration that gives an un-

SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST. — Page 318.

speakable poignancy to his grief. So infinitely dishonoring is sin to all JEHOVAH'S attributes, and, consequently, so inconceivably odious in his sight, that the repenting sinner is overwhelmed with a sense of his own rebellion, baseness, and ingratitude. The language of the royal penitent is the burden of every penitent's lamentation "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight."

Another characteristic of true repentance is, that it has respect unto Him who paid the penalty of sin, even unto JESUS CHRIST, hanging on the accursed tree. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him." Zech. xii. 10. The eyes of the mind having been opened to see that "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities;" and, at the same time, the heart having been made to believe that the "blood of JESUS CHRIST, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin," there is then a sorrowing after a godly sort. The believing penitent beholds the adorable Redeemer suffering, bleeding, dying for his sins. Every pang that was suffered he considers as caused by his iniquities; and every drop of blood that was shed, as the price of his redemption. By these marks our repentance may be tried, of what sort it is. We shall be able to discover whether ours is a natural sorrow for sin, or a spiritual sorrow; whether we are only soothing ourselves with a false idea of repentance, or are real penitents in the sight of GOD. Let us remember that there is a repentance which the very worst of characters are susceptible of; a repentance which consists with the love, if not the practice of, all kinds of abominations and sins; a repentance with which the devil satisfies the minds of them who believe not, to their everlasting ruin. O let us search with the utmost anxiety for Scriptural evidences of our repenting unto salvation. Let us see whether, in our daily life and conversation, we are bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. Where the heart is changed, the life also will be changed. "Behold this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort," says the apostle to the Corinthians, "what carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of yourselves; yea, what indignation; yea, what fear; yea, what vehement desire; yea, what zeal; yea, what revenge!" Let us evermore pray for the grace of repentance, or the increase of it, that we may be, in the midst of a perverse and crooked generation, as those who sigh and cry for the abominations that have been done, whether by ourselves individually, or by our country, or by the world at large.

The preaching of John attracted considerable notice; for at that time there was a great expectation of an extraordinary person to arise for the redemption of Israel, though the Jews all labored under wrong ideas of the person, nature, and office of the MESSIAH. There was something peculiarly striking in the manner and the doctrine of John, which brought him numerous hearers and disciples. He appeared like one of the ancient prophets, and the austerity of his life diffused an awe around his person, and created a reverence for his doctrine. "There went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." Matt. iii. 5, 6.

His discourses were pungent, and adapted to awaken men's minds from a state of self-confidence, and to fill them with penitential sorrow on account of their transgressions. He was particularly severe upon the Pharisees, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and upon the Sadducees, who were unconcerned about a future state, and the doctrine of redemption. John flattered none who came to him, but delivered the truths of GOD with plainness and in terms suited to every man's condition. Nor would he baptize any who did not manifest signs of repentance; for it is observed, that those to whom he administered that holy ordinance "confessed their sins."

Thus, on the banks of the river Jordan, did John announce the REDEEMER of Israel, and prepare men for his reception by the rite of baptism. While he was thus engaged JESUS came from Galilee, and presented himself in the assembly that attended upon John, "to be baptized of him." He who knew no sin, but was to take away the sins of all other men, presented himself in the crowd of sinners, as one of them, and solicited baptism.

Though JESUS came without any marks of distinction, but humble and submissive to the minister of GOD, he was quickly discovered by the Baptist. Surprised that the Master should so far stoop as to solicit baptism from the servant, that the LORD of life should come to receive this ordinance when he had no sins to confess, or to wash away, John at first refused him: "I have need to be baptized of thee," says he, "and comest thou to me?" But the reply of the SAVIOUR silenced all his objections at once: "Suffer

THE RIVER JORDAN.

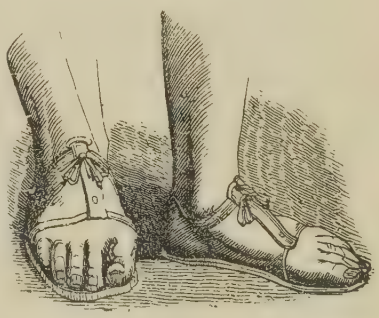
it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And JESUS, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of GOD descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. iii. 15–17.

A beautiful feature in John's character is the lowly spirit which he manifested on every occasion. Great popularity is dangerous to the most sanctified minds. In what a critical situation, then, was the Baptist placed, when he was followed by men of all ranks and sects, when his fame was echoed far and near, and when "all men mused in their hearts concerning him, whether he was the CHRIST." Luke iii. 15.

The Sanhedrim themselves were in a state of perplexity on the subject, and wishing to be satisfied on a matter of so much concern, sent a deputation to John with this question—"Who art thou?" John i. 19. John knew their drift, but readily answered, that he was not the MESSIAH whom they expected. They then asked him, "What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not;" that is, not in the sense in which you look for him. They still urged him with their inquiries: "Art thou that prophet?" meaning, as is commonly supposed, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets whom the Jews expected to arise from the dead. To this also the Baptist answered "No;" but the messengers were not to be driven from their purpose. The concise answer given by John to all their questions served only to heighten their curiosity; they therefore came to the very point, and compelled him, as it were, to give some satisfactory and explicit answer. "Then said they to him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?" John readily complied with their request, and by applying to himself one of the clearest predictions in the prophetic Scriptures, pointed them directly to the glorious personage of whom he was the precursor: "He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the LORD, as said the prophet Esaias."

So positive a declaration ought immediately to have filled their minds with admiration of his humility, and have prompted them to a devout inquiry concerning the approach of the Sun of righteousness; but "they were Pharisees," and the manners and doctrine of the Baptist were repugnant to their ostentatious sentiments. From tempting him by artful questions, which answered not the end they had in view, these hypocrites proceeded to censure him for assuming a commission to which he had no right. "Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that CHRIST, nor Elias, neither that prophet?"

Unmoved by this reproach, he modestly explained the nature of his institution to be only preparatory to a spiritual one which was to be administered shortly by the MESSIAH. "I indeed baptize you with water, but there standeth one among you whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." Thus did the Baptist bear witness to his Master in the presence of the priests and Levites, and the people, at "Bethabara, beyond Jordan, where he was baptizing." He took pains to divert the attention of men from himself, and to direct all their solicitude and admiration to that glorious personage of whom he was the harbinger. The very day after this interview with the messengers of the Sanhedrim, John embraced the opportunity, as JESUS was coming to him, of announcing him to the people as the MESSIAH: "Behold the LAMB OF GOD, which taketh away the sin of the world."



SANDALS.

This declaration was explicit, and comprehended the mediatorial character of CHRIST in the most appropriate language; but the effect it produced on the people is not recorded. The next day, however, John, seeing him as he walked, saith to two of his disciples who were with him, "Behold the LAMB OF GOD," on which they immediately quitted their master and followed JESUS. This was the very thing which John intended. He wanted not to retain authority, or to be followed by the people any longer, since the "fulfiller of all righteousness" was entered upon his great office

The "light of the world" being now risen, the "day star," which proclaimed his approach, must necessarily decrease and sink away beneath his overpowering splendor. John was content with having faithfully discharged his mission; and it gave him uneasiness when some of his disciples expressed a degree of concern and envy at the increasing fame of JESUS. They were jealous for the honor of their master, and thus expressed their complaint: "Rabbi, he who was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come unto him." They thought it presumptuous in one who had received baptism from John, to minister the same ordinance, and to gather disciples, so little had they profited by their master's repeated declarations, that he was only come as a messenger to prepare the way of the LORD. A very different spirit animated this exalted character; instead of being concerned at the intelligence which his disciples communicated, he rejoiced, and endeavored to correct their wrong notions by describing plainly the superior authority of JESUS. "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the CHRIST, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony." John iii. 28—32. Such was the full and decisive testimony which John bore to the divine nature and the mediatorial office of the MESSIAH. The church, consisting of the redeemed out of all lands, belongs to JESUS CHRIST as the bridegroom, and therefore to him does every faithful minister, like the Baptist, refer men, as their LORD and GOD "who is above all." It was a source of abundant delight to John that the MESSIAH's kingdom was begun; and though sensible of his own speedy dissolution, he declares that his "joy was fulfilled because he had heard the bridegroom's voice." This alone can give true content and pleasure to the mind of man when all things are warning him that he is "of the earth, earthly," and must shortly sink into the dark and silent grave. There can be no satisfaction in such a state of decay but what ariseth from friendship with CHRIST, the bridegroom of his church, from a constant reliance upon his merits as the complete atonement for our sins, and from an humble obedience of the divine precepts contained in his blessed gospel.

The life of the Baptist was a continued course of abstinence, mortification, poverty, and labor; and the close of it was such as became the messenger of a lowly and suffering Redeemer. His extraordinary sanctity attracted the notice of Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee, who had the curiosity to hear him; and so powerful were the discourses of the Baptist, that Herod took a pleasure in attending to them, and was moved thereby to do many commendable things. But his was a superficial reformation, for at this very time he kept Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. John, like a faithful minister of GOD, neither passed over this circumstance in silence, nor did he touch upon it in gentle terms, but plainly reproved Herod for his criminal conduct: "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." Mark xvi. 8. As long as the preacher omitted to notice this tender point, Herod respected him, and paid a ready attention to his discourses; but when he denounced the terrors of the law against this adulterous connexion, then the mask of hypocrisy fell off, and the faithful monitor was cast into prison. Sinners are willing enough to hear general declamations against vice, or even declamations against particular offences, provided their own propensities and habits are left unnoticed. The covetous and unfeeling wretch will commend a discourse levelled against intemperance and debauchery, and the libertine will bestow warm encomiums on the sermon which delineates with accuracy the sordid miser, and which powerfully exposes the sinfulness of an inordinate love of riches. Every man will patiently bear what does not render his own conscience uneasy; but the instant the attack is made upon his bosom iniquity, and the application is so close and direct that he cannot avoid it, then the heart swells against the faithful monitor, and respect is changed into hatred.

John, in prison, meditates not upon his affliction, but upon the interests of his heavenly LORD. The wonderful works of JESUS being reported to him, he sent two of his disciples to inquire, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Matt. xi. 3. Was the faith of this excellent man then so weak that he should be now in doubt upon a subject on which he had repeatedly delivered his testimony? Can

HEROD.

we suppose that he wanted this information for his own satisfaction; he who had witnessed the baptism of CHRIST in the river Jordan; and who had, moreover, declared that this "was the LAMB OF GOD, which taketh away the sin of the world?"

This certainly could not have been the case. John was fully convinced that "JESUS was the CHRIST," but his disciples were not so well persuaded. They still, with a very laudable zeal, continued attached to their master, though in a dungeon. For their sakes then did John propound this question to JESUS; and our LORD in his answer carried on the same charitable plan, by instructing the disciples while he seemed to be instructing their master.

He appealed to his miracles, which he wrought in their presence, as decisive evidences of his being the promised MESSIAH, since these very things were predicted of him centuries before by the prophets. "Then said he unto them, Go your way and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me."

These were tidings which rendered the dismal abode of John more cheerful than the palace of his persecutors. John was calm, tranquil, and happy in his dungeon, while the wretched Herod and his abandoned partner were a prey to the worst of passions.

Though Herod had no regard for religion, or the common principles of justice, he had some fear of the Jews, who held John in high estimation as a prophet. He had besides a fear of the Baptist in his heart, for such is the commanding influence of eminent sanctity and zeal, as to inspire even the wicked with some degree of esteem and respect.

Herod's intention, perhaps, was to keep John in close confinement; but Herodias entertained a deadly hatred against the holy man, and "having a quarrel against him, ενειχεν αυτον, *she fastened upon him* as a ferocious beast does upon its prey." Mark vi. 19.

Vengeful minds are indefatigable in their pursuit, and having once formed their determination, they are seldom long in putting it into execution. An opportunity soon presented itself to the merciless Herodias, and she was not wanting in seizing it for her sanguinary purpose. Herod kept his birth-day in much state, and "made a great supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee." On that occasion Salome, the daughter of Herodias, by her lawful husband Philip, was sent by her mother to dance before the company.

Herod was so delighted with the performance of Salome, that he immediately bound himself by a rash oath to give her "whatever she should ask, even to the half of his kingdom." He little thought what a dreadful price he was to pay for the entertainment which he had received. The whole of his kingdom was of infinitely less value than his immortal soul; and yet this was the recompense demanded. Salome hastens to inform her mother of the extravagant promise which had been made by Herod; and having received her instructions, she, without any hesitation, enters again the royal presence, and requires "the head of John the Baptist in a charger."

Herod was astonished and troubled at the shocking request. He "was very sorry," yet, "for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her."

Thus, rather than break a rash oath, made in a fit of intemperance, Herod yielded to the commission of a crime at which nature revolts. But he was entangled in the snares of guilt, and had, like Ahab, "sold himself to another Jezebel, to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD." The deed was done in the darkness of the night, and, perhaps, the Baptist was awakened from the sweet sleep of innocence to submit his neck to the executioner. The head was conveyed to the palace,* and in the pres-

* THE PALACE OF HEROD stands on a table of land, on the very summit of the hill, overlooking every part of the surrounding country; and such were the exceeding softness and beauty of the scene, even under the wildness and waste of Arab cultivation, that the city seemed smiling in the midst of her desolation. All around was a beautiful valley, watered by running streams, and covered by a rich carpet of grass, sprinkled with wild flowers of every hue; and beyond, stretched like an open book before me, a boundary of fruitful mountains, the vine and the olive rising in terraces to their very summits. There, day after day, the haughty Herod had sat in his royal palace, and, looking out upon all these beauties, his heart had become hardened with prosperity; here, among these still towering columns, the proud monarch had made a supper "to his lords, and high captains, and chief estates of Galilee;" here the daughter of Herodias, Herod's brother's wife "danced before him, and the proud king promised with an oath to give her whatever she

ORIENTAL STATE DINNER.

DANCING WOMEN.

ence of the assembly delivered to this young damsel, who, without being shocked at the dreadful object, readily accepted the reward of her performance, and took it to her mother. It would seem hardly credible, that so much insensibility and depravity could possess a female heart, and that at so early a period of life; but Salome was the daughter of Herodias, whose instruction and example were united to inspire her mind with every vicious propensity, and an abhorrence of all that was good.

The death of John was painful but momentary; it was sudden, but it could not find him unprepared. He had kept the faith, and preserved a conscience void of offence. He had done his duty, and waited daily and hourly, we may be sure, for his departure. He was now, therefore, called off from his station with honor, to quit the well-fought field for the palace of the Great King; to refresh himself after the dust, and toil, and heat of the day, by bathing in the fountain of life and immortality: to exchange his blood-stained armor for a robe of glory, and to have his temporary labors rewarded with eternal rest; to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom

should ask, even to the half of his kingdom." And while the feast and dance went on, the "head of John the Baptist was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel." And Herod has gone, and Herodias, Herod's brother's wife, has gone, and "the lords, and the high captains, and the chief estates of Galilee" are gone: but the ruins of the palace in which they feasted are still here; the mountains and valleys which beheld their revels are here: and (Oh! what a comment upon the vanity of worldly greatness!) a fellah was turning his plough around one of the columns. I was sitting on a broken capital, under a fig-tree by its side, and I asked him what the ruins were we saw; and while his oxen were quietly cropping the grass that grew among the fragments of the marble floor, he told me that they were the ruins of the palace of a king—he believed—of the Christians; and while pilgrims from every quarter of the world turn aside from their path to do homage in the prison of his beheaded victim, the Arab who was driving his plough among the columns of his palace knew not the name of the haughty Herod. Even at this distance of time, I look back with a feeling of uncommon interest upon my ramble among those ruins—talking with the Arab ploughman of the king who built it, leaning against a column which perhaps had often supported the haughty Herod, and looking out from this scene of desolation and ruin upon the most beautiful country in the Holy Land.—*Stephens's Incidents of Travel in the Holy Land.*

of GOD; and as the friend of the bridegroom, to enter into the joy of his LORD. From the darkness and confinement of a prison he passed to the liberty and light of heaven; and while malice was gratified with a sight of his head, and his body was carried by a few friends in silence to the grave, his immortal spirit repaired to a court, where no Herod desires to have his brother's wife; where no Herodias thirsts after the blood of a prophet; where he who hath labored, with sincerity and diligence, in the work of reformation, is sure to be well received, and hear the welcome plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy LORD." Matt. xxv. 23.

BETHLEHEM.

JESUS CHRIST.

BORN, ACCORDING TO THE VULGAR COMPUTATION, ANNO MUNDI 4004; CRUCIFIED ANNO DOMINI 33.

HE birth of a child is, under any circumstances, an event of the highest interest. Expectation has at length given place to reality; another being has come into the world, to fill our place when we are gone, and to run his course of joy or suffering, till he is called on in his turn to make room for those beneath him. At such a season every heart beats high with expectation, and every countenance is lighted up with pleasure. The cheerful tones of congratulation, the light step of innocent gladness, the pressure of the friendly hand, are there, till the father's heart is softened with the consciousness of his happiness, and the mother feels her pangs requited for joy that a man is born into the world. We gaze on the new-born infant, as he sleeps all careless of the interest he has excited; and hope, with fond credulity, will image forth many a scene of usefulness and delight in which he may live to share.

Yet there are sadder thoughts which crowd into the reflecting mind in spite of all its efforts. Is he indeed destined to survive the perils of infancy, and the adventurous rashness of youth? Will he be one of those whom good men delight to honor, serviceable in his generation, and leaving a bright example to all who follow him? or will he be one whose track is stained with guilt, and whose end is pointed at by shame? What hardships and trials, what buffetings and afflictions, may be the lot of this unconscious slumberer! What furious passions may one day tear this helpless bosom! What vain hopes, and ardent projects, and bitter disappointments, may disturb his peace! And will he repay our present anxiety by soothing the infirmity of our declining years? or will he bring our gray hairs in sorrow to the grave? Alas! we cannot tell. Years may pass away before his character and destiny are determined; and we may never live to see the result, to comfort him in his troubles, or to rejoice in his success.

These we suppose are thoughts which must be familiar to all at least who have rejoiced in the names of husband and father. But we are now to consider the birth of an Infant to whom we may all claim relationship; of that auspicious Babe on whose appearance our eternal interests depended. In the fulness of time God sent his Son into the world in form and fashion as a man, and made under the law, that we might be redeemed from its curse. This was the greatest event the world had ever witnessed; the object for which all other events had been directed by an overruling Providence. Prophets and righteous men had desired in vain to see it; nor could the very angels of heaven anticipate the accomplishment of this mysterious act of wisdom and of love. But will God indeed dwell with men—with men benighted in ignorance and depraved by sin? Behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain him; and how shall he stoop to enter this, the meanest and most polluted region of his unmeasured dominions? Or, if he come among us, in what guise shall he appear that is suited to his dignity?

With what awful terrors might we expect him to come armed, the heavens bowed beneath his feet, the earth shrinking from his presence, the guilty sons of men calling on the rocks to fall on them, and the mountains to cover them from his wrath. Fear not, for GOD sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He came, not to plague us for our offences, but to help our infirmities; not to call us to our account, but to provide a remedy for our sins.

Such is the SAVIOUR whose character we shall now attempt to delineate. And well may we feel a suspicion and diffidence of ourselves, while portraying the history of Him who was no less than "GOD manifest in the flesh." 1 Tim. iii. 16. And well does this great mystery call for our admiration and gratitude, that "He in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead" (Col. ii. 9) should lay aside his robes of majesty, descend from his throne of glory, and "be made in the likeness of sinful flesh." Rom. viii. 3. So great is the importance of the present theme in every view, such a divine splendor and glory are cast around it, and so profound are the mysteries with which it is connected, that our minds are filled with an awful reverence when we draw near to contemplate, and we seem disposed rather to stand at a distance, in silent and devout admiration.

But the difficulty of the task should not discourage our humble, though weak endeavors. Only let us undertake it with earnest supplication, that we may not "darken counsel by words without knowledge." In the study of every part of the sacred Scriptures, we have continual need of prayer, that we may possess a just and spiritual discernment. But here, especially, while the LORD himself comes down from heaven, and passes by before us, we should beg that the veil may be removed from our minds, and that He, "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, may shine into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST." 2 Cor. iv. 6. The history of Cesar or Alexander may be perused with indifference, or, if you please, with the severity of criticism; but the history of the SON of GOD is no matter of idle amusement, or curious speculation: for every thing here is wonderful, and designed to excite in us the devout affections of gratitude, love, and zeal.

A right apprehension of his character will constrain us to cry out with Simeon, in rapturous adoration, "LORD, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,—for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Luke ii. 29, 30. Every proper view of Him will also produce a sanctifying influence; for, "with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the LORD, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD." 2 Cor. iii. 18.

The most superficial observer must allow, that the history of JESUS is replete with wonders. Almost every circumstance in it is uncommon and unparalleled. He was born, he lived, suffered, and died, in a very different way from any other man. This originality of his character is a strong presumption in favor of his religion; because no impostor ever did resemble him, nor is it probable that such a resemblance would ever be pretended.

It is not our design to produce the many evidences which might be offered, in support and confirmation of our holy faith. But it may be noted briefly, that the proof of the whole depends on this single fact, that there did really exist such a person as JESUS of Nazareth. And this is established upon stronger testimony than any other similar fact can be. The declarations of many ancient pagan writers put it beyond a doubt; and it is manifest, that the first and bitterest opposers of the gospel never once denied it. It is also more clearly ascertained by the propagation and continuance of Christianity in the world. For whence did this system take its rise, or how could it have been supported, if there had never been such a teacher as JESUS CHRIST?

But it is asked, Are the records, which describe his life and character, genuine accounts, and what may safely be relied on? The answer is obvious: the books of the New Testament have a more convincing evidence of their authenticity, than any other writings of the like ancient date. The history of our LORD is transmitted to us by those who possessed the most certain information upon the subject. The Evangelists, Matthew and John, were disciples, and constant attendants of JESUS; Mark and Luke, also, had the best opportunities of being acquainted with his actions and discourses from the apostles themselves; the former, it is believed, being the companion of St. Peter, as the latter was of St. Paul. These published their narrations very soon after the transactions which they relate, and in the midst of enemies; so

that their accounts, if false, might, and no doubt would, have been denied and confuted. But they have stood the test of ages; every attempt to overturn them tends to confirm their authority the more. Indeed, their integrity appears by many indubitable marks. The manner of their writing is peculiar to themselves: for their artless simplicity is such as proves that they did not contrive a system of their own. They delivered plain facts without disguise, and generally without any reflections which might bias their readers; so that, from the circumstances fairly represented, we are left to draw the necessary conclusions for ourselves.

It is often asked, "Why the ALMIGHTY could not have rendered some earlier period equally suitable for the coming of CHRIST? Why should such an inestimable blessing be so long withheld?" These are ignorant and presumptuous questions. For who are we, that we should require the GOD of heaven to justify to us the wisdom and propriety of his dispensations? Many reasons might be assigned why His coming was delayed so long; and we think that it can be demonstrated that the age of the MESSIAH's advent was singularly favorable for the introduction, diffusion, and confirmation of the Christian religion. These reasons, to the great mass of readers, are not, indeed, of a very obvious nature; and this fact, in the opinion of some, may seem greatly to militate against the truth of our most holy faith. If, however, we contemplate with attention the dealings of GOD with our fallen race, we shall find that there was an absolute necessity for the long delay; and consequently, that the objection which is grounded upon it, though apparently of considerable weight, is in reality futile. From the reasoning of the adversaries of Christianity, we might be led to imagine, that for the space of four thousand years GOD was, as it were, unaccountably forgetful or regardless of the spiritual interests of mankind at large, but that at length he suddenly resolved on attempting to recover them from their ruined condition. The fallacy of this will be evident, if we reflect that, though many ages elapsed before the MESSIAH appeared, the interval was marked by most important interpositions of the DEITY; and that the ALMIGHTY was then trying experiments, to convince mankind of their inability to act in conformity with the moral law by their own unassisted endeavors; and thus gradually preparing the way for the introduction of the Christian dispensation.

When our first parents fell from original righteousness, and thereby subjected themselves and their posterity to the power of natural and moral evil, GOD was graciously pleased to vouchsafe unto them a promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. From this time ages rolled on, and patriarch after patriarch was gathered to his kindred dust, yet no signs of the fulfilment of the promise appeared; but, on the contrary, "the wickedness of man was great, and every imagination of his heart was only evil continually;" "the earth was filled with violence;" and GOD's intelligent creatures were Satan's devoted servants. Such was the state of the world even in the lifetime of the contemporaries with him who could tell of the delights of Eden; with him who could indeed testify that all the ways of religion "are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;" with him who, of all the human race, must have known most accurately, and have felt most acutely, the heinous nature and the awful consequences of sin. Having fallen into this depraved condition, mankind were now threatened with destruction, unless they repented of their iniquities and turned to their Maker; and when all the commands, exhortations, and warnings they received for the space of one hundred and twenty years were found to be in vain, and any longer forbearance was useless, the floods descended, and "every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground . . . . And Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark."

Surely, after such an awful punishment of the guilty millions of the race of Adam, such a mighty demonstration of JEHOVAH's powers, such a terrible vindication of his authority, one might have expected that it was only for him to make known his holy will in order to be obeyed. But the very reverse of this was the case. Even though the great preacher of righteousness to the antediluvian world lived for three hundred and fifty years after the flood, and must have raised his voice against the practice of iniquity to the latest period of his existence, his descendants quickly sank into idolatry and sin of every kind; and only a century after he died, so excessive was the depravity of Sodom and Gomorrha, that they were consumed by fire from heaven.

After a lapse of more than two thousand years from the time when Satan usurped the sovereignty of the human race, Abraham was commanded by GOD to leave his

country and his friends, and seek a land separated from the place where he dwelt by great rivers, extensive and perilous deserts, and a distance of several hundred miles, that he might become the father of many nations, the ancestor of a long line of prophets, priests, and kings, and the stock whence should spring the SAVIOUR of mankind. The promise of the MESSIAH, which was given at the fall, was renewed to him: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." And "when Abraham was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abraham, and said unto him, I am the almighty GOD; walk before me, and be thou perfect. . . . And I will make thee exceeding fruitful. . . . And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their GOD." Within four hundred and fifty years from the declaration of these promises, the descendants of the patriarch were settled in the land of Egypt; were afterwards delivered from the hand of their oppressors in spite of all the power of the Egyptian monarch; were miraculously sustained in a great and terrible wilderness, in which, on account of their unbelief, they were sentenced to wander for forty years; were enabled to vanquish and dispossess seven nations mightier than themselves; and finally, to the number of many hundreds of thousands, took possession of the rest and the inheritance ensured unto them by the covenant of a GOD of eternal truth and power.

When the children of Israel were encamped before Mount Sinai, various commandments were delivered to them by JEHOVAH, after the most solemn preparation, and amid thunders and lightnings, amid earthquakes, clouds, and thick darkness.

In addition to the ten commandments of the moral law, which are of universal and lasting obligation, GOD promulgated the statutes and ordinances comprised in the ceremonial and civil code, for the purpose of separating his people from the rest of the world, that their observance of the moral precepts might be the more effectually ensured; and that the knowledge of the one true GOD, and the promise of a REDEEMER, might be preserved among the children of men.

Nor did the care of the DEITY stop here. Having thus established his peculiar people in the land of promise, he manifested the glory of his presence among them; he delivered them into the hand of their enemies, to check them in their career of guilt, and then stretched forth his almighty arm to save them as soon as they repented; he wrought his wonders in the midst of them; he sent a succession of holy prophets to rebuke and to warn them; and, in a word, he tried every method to enforce the observance of his commands which was consistent with the true purpose of the Divine counsels. Any stronger means would have caused constraint, which could only have produced an unwilling conformity by leaving no room for the exercise of virtue. To use, indeed, the words of the apostle Paul, "If there had been a lawgiver which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." Yet although a knowledge of the living GOD and an expectation of the MESSIAH were preserved in the earth, still, in this case also the paths of rectitude were entirely forsaken.

At the time when CHRIST came into the world, and for ages preceding his advent, the condition of the Gentiles was appalling in the extreme. Error, superstition, and vice, in every shape and form, reigned triumphant. And the philosophers themselves, even with the light which they unquestionably derived from revelation, were not only unable to produce any change in the morals of the heathen, but secretly participated in the general depravity.

Now it was essentially necessary, that at the coming of CHRIST, a universal corruption should prevail, in order "that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world might become guilty before GOD,"—so that "the promise by faith of CHRIST might be given to them that believe." And it was also indispensably necessary that there should be no room for expecting any beneficial change in the condition of mankind, either under the Mosaic dispensation, or from the efforts of philosophy. Unless the depravity of the human heart had become manifest from the existence of the most dreadful external effects, and the total inability of man to attain unto righteousness by his own unaided endeavors had been made fully apparent, the world would not have been prepared for the Christian dispensation. For if this depravity and this inability had not been thus developed, few would have been convinced that it was necessary for the SON OF GOD to descend from the realms of glory to appear in the likeness of sinful flesh, to be rejected and despised, reviled and persecuted, and finally to suffer a

most cruel and ignominious death; nor would man have been found to relinquish his proud confidence in his own strength, to seek the assistance of the HOLY SPIRIT. Nothing could be more humiliating to human pride than the doctrines of the Gospel nothing more opposed to the views of the natural man, and the feelings of the unrenewed heart. And hence, if reason could possibly have suggested any other mode of salvation which would have been likely to prove effectual, that economy of "grace and truth" which "came by JESUS CHRIST" would have been assuredly rejected.

But knowing the excess of iniquity into which the world had fallen, the futility of all the means which had hitherto been tried for its reformation, and their own inability to imagine any method better calculated to promote the cause of righteousness than those which had been actually adopted; and having been led to expect the Messenger of another covenant by predictions and by types,—thousands, who otherwise would never have been prepared to receive the humbling doctrines of the cross, were enabled to exclaim, with reference to the MESSIAH, "LO! this is our GOD; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him: we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

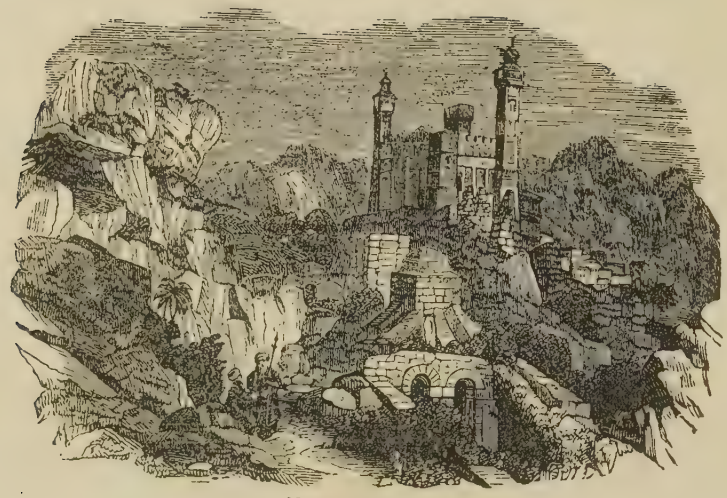
It is necessary that these important facts should be deeply felt and understood, otherwise the whole volume of inspiration will be "a sealed book," and the great scheme of redemption itself be perplexed and unintelligible. We have been contemplating many circumstances and institutions which all had a symbolical allusion to the great sacrifice to be offered up once for all, as an atonement for the sins of mankind. The promise of that deliverer was made as soon as the offence came, and immediately after that sentence was pronounced. It was kept as an inestimable treasure by the patriarchs, and transmitted by them as a sacred trust to their descendants. It was reiterated from heaven on various occasions, and to different persons. It formed the essence of the Mosaic ritual, and was the great theme of the Psalmist, and of all the prophets. But the expectation of the saints of old was never directed to the birth of a mere mortal man, or to the descent of a being (Isaiah lxiii. 1) less than GOD. It was well understood by them all, that salvation would be the work of JEHOVAH alone, and that no created intelligence could possibly rescue human nature from the power of hell or the grave.

The faith of the patriarchs, of prophets, and of all who "waited for the consolation of Israel," was fixed upon one who "should be mighty to save." Isaiah liii. 8. Every prediction of him conveys the idea of his Godhead, and of a voluntary degradation of himself, that we might be restored to the divine favor, and have an admission into the kingdom of glory. That he was to be born of a virgin, was expressly declared by the prophet Isaiah, who in a striking allusion to the same circumstance puts this question, "Who shall declare his generation?" John i. 1.

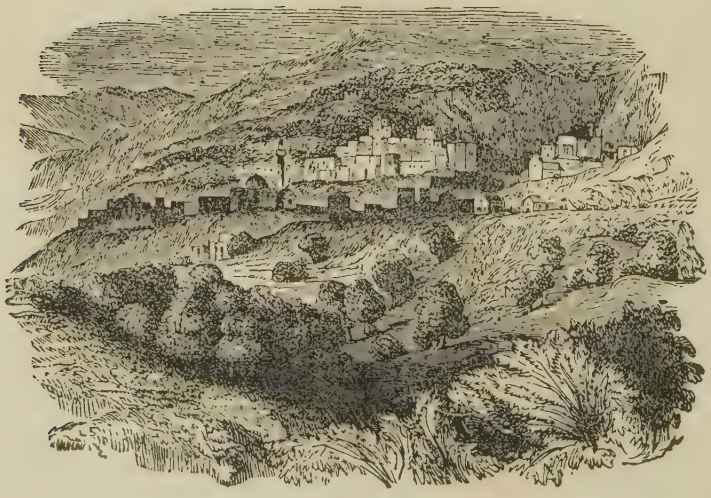
For this great event, the minds of men were prepared by a vast variety of prophecies, and it is evident that about the time when the REDEEMER came, there was a general expectation of some extraordinary person to appear in the world. They whose minds were under the influence of carnal prejudices, looked for a mighty potentate and an illustrious conqueror; but the quiet and simple-hearted, who were dead to worldly glory, "waited for the consolation of Israel," in silent and patient submission to the will of Heaven.

It was now a time of general peace throughout the world. Augustus swayed the sceptre of almost universal dominion, and Judea, though it had a nominal monarch of its own, was no more than a Roman province.

The "fulness of time," as determined by ancient prophecy, being now come, a heavenly messenger was sent to an obscure virgin of Nazareth named MARY, to announce the honorable tidings that she was the person chosen to bear the promised MESSIAH. "Behold," says the angel Gabriel, "thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the LORD GOD shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke i. 31—33. The pious virgin, conscious of her spotless chastity, modestly replied, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" The angel then assured her that this should be accomplished by the Holy Ghost; and to confirm his declaration, he informed her that her "cousin Elisabeth had conceived a son in her old age, and that it was the sixth month with her that was called barren." This overcame the doubts of Mary, and she devoutly acquiesced in the divine word, with a degree



VIEW OF HEBRON.



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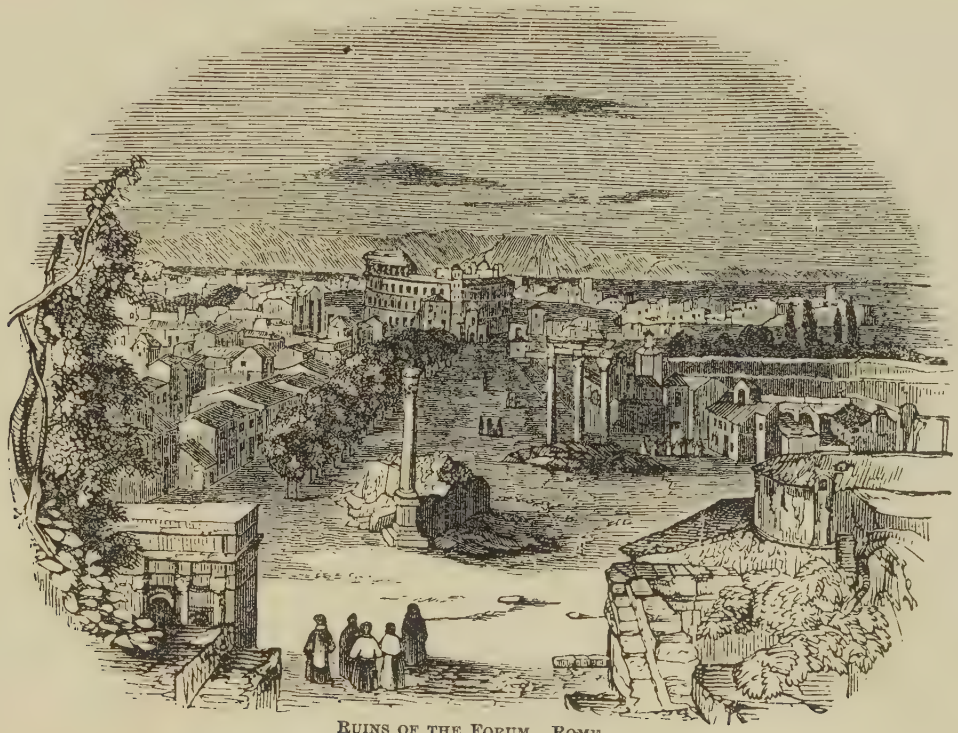


RUINS OF THE FORUM. ROME.

of faith, which showed she was the true daughter of Abraham, "who believed even against hope."

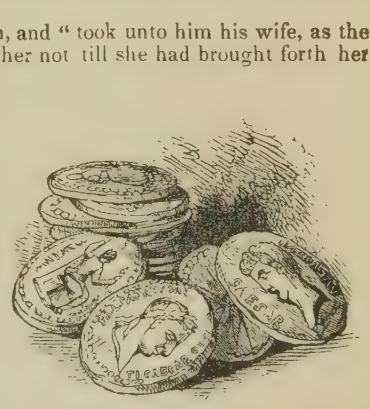
Shortly after this she hastened on a visit to her cousin Elisabeth at Hebron, though at a distance of about forty leagues. On entering the house of Zacharias, the "babe that was in the womb of Elisabeth leaped for joy," and the mother, being instantly inspired, returned the virgin's salutation in the same words which the angel had uttered:—"Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my LORD should come to me? for lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the LORD." Luke i. 42—45.

The holy effusion was caught by the blessed Virgin, who expressed her joy and gratitude in the following sublime hymn: "And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the LORD, and my spirit hath rejoiced in GOD my SAVIOUR. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation. He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed, for ever." Luke i. 46—55.

After abiding with Elisabeth three months, Mary returned home to Nazareth, where Joseph, to whom she had been betrothed, began to make preparations for their nuptials. But while he was thus engaged, it appeared that his intended bride was already with child. The circumstance greatly affected the good man, for the Jewish law was extremely severe upon women who should be found in that condition, whether they were actually espoused or only betrothed. But Joseph was a righteous man, and not being willing to make a public example of Mary, he formed the resolution of putting her away privately, as if she never had been betrothed to him. There was much generosity and tenderness in this design, and believing, as he must, that she had been guilty of a gross violation of faith and decency, it manifests in Joseph great goodness of heart. But he was not suffered to remain under the delusion of appearances. The same night, after he had been revolving this misfortune in his mind, and had brought himself to this prudent determination, the "angel of the LORD appeared to him in a dream," and warned him against pursuing the measure he had devised, for that his wife's conception was the immediate operation of the HOLY GHOST, and that she should bring forth a son, whom "he should call JESUS, because he would save his people from their sins." Matt. i. 21.

The good man yielded to the divine monition, and "took unto him his wife, as the angel of the LORD had bidden him, but knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son."

By a very striking prophecy, the birth-place of the MESSIAH was accurately determined to be at Bethlehem in Judea. Divine providence accomplishes its purposes and predictions in ways very remote from what human wisdom and policy would consider as the most natural. Joseph and Mary resided at a considerable distance from Bethlehem, but a circumstance occurred which compelled them to go thither when she was far advanced in her pregnancy. The emperor's treasury having been greatly exhausted, he issued a decree that all his subjects, including the inhabitants of the conquered countries as well as Romans, should be registered or enrolled in order to be taxed. This edict rendered it necessary that Joseph and Mary should repair to Bethlehem, as being both of the house and lineage of David, to be registered in the mother-city of their tribe, which was that of Judah.



GROUP OF ROMAN DENARII. Those in the foreground are of the coinage of Augustus and Tiberias, who governed Judea during the time of CHRIST.

BETHLEHEM.
The large building in the centre of the drawing is the convent, erected over what tradition affirms to be the Cave of the Nativity.

Here the SAVIOUR of the world was born, but not in those splendid circumstances, and attended with that pomp and grandeur, which the Jews, from a misconception of the prophetic phrases, considered as necessary to distinguish the deliverer of their nation. He was to be engaged in a spiritual redemption, and as pride had been the ruin of mankind, therefore humility must be their restoration. Bethlehem at this time was crowded with persons who came thither in consequence of the imperial mandate, and the inn, or caravansari, (see engraving) was so full that no room could be found for Joseph and Mary. How fluctuating is all worldly glory, and what reason have men to be proud of an illustrious lineage, when they contemplate these pious persons of the royal house of Judah, sojourning in a stable! There did the holy Virgin give birth to the long-promised and much-expected MESSIAH, "the Prince of Peace, and the King of Righteousness."

The world at large was immersed in business, superstition, or folly, when this wonderful event took place, and even the inhabitants of Bethlehem had no concern about the obscure strangers that were with them. But on that night it pleased the ALMIGHTY to reveal the glad intelligence to some poor shepherds who were keeping watch

ORIENTAL SHEPHERDS.

CARAVANSARI, OR EASTERN INN

over their flocks in the same fields where David formerly attended his sheep, and, under the influence of inspiration, sung the praises of his REDEEMER.

While these pious shepherds were, perhaps, employed in a way somewhat similar to this, or at least in a religious and improving conversation, of which "the salvation of Israel" made no inconsiderable part, a choir of angels appeared and declared to them the "good tidings of great joy, that a SAVIOUR was born in the city of David, who was CHRIST the LORD." Luke ii. 10, &c. After giving them a sign by which they should find him, the angels joined together in singing "Glory to GOD in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men."

It may be questioned whether the current opinion respecting the residence of angels—the opinion, we mean, of its vast remoteness from the earth—has a solid foundation to rest upon; and whether a doctrine far more delightful to the religious mind be not also more in unison with philosophy and with the Bible. On a subject which can only be learned from revelation, and on which nothing explicit has been revealed, though here and there a gleam of Scriptural light is cast upon it, it becomes us to offer our conjectures with religious modesty and diffidence. A peremptory dogmatism, always offensive, borders on impiety when indulged on themes of such high import as this. But it is not improper, we conceive, but rather commendable, to bring our own minds, and the minds of others, into contact with beings of an order much superior to ours, by reverently collecting from the scattered notices which are furnished by inspired pens, such a history of their character and properties, their state and occupation, as may be framed without any strained or fanciful interpretation of the sacred record. By the contemplation of these high topics the mind will be refined; it will be raised above the common businesses of life to sublime walks of thought and speculation, and will be helped to maintain a spiritual tone, and a holy intercourse with heaven.

Pursuing this cautious track of investigation, we have been led to conclude, from several passages of Scripture in which angels are produced as agents in one transaction or other on the theatre of this world, that our vicinity to their abode is far closer than is generally suspected. Indeed, our nursery-lessons, for the most part, lead us to think of heaven as of a place immensely remote, divided from our globe by an interval which none but pinions of prodigious force could traverse in almost any conceivable time. And this undoubtedly may be the case. It is nowise impossible that the seraph's wing should be endued with a velocity immeasurably exceeding that of sound, or even of light. It is not incredible that GOD's immediate servants, being qualified by their make and constitution to pass, with a celerity that mocks at space and time, from one point to another, should have their dwelling-place at so immense a distance from our system, that in comparison with it, the furthest star were less than a day's journey. In this supposition there is a grandeur of which the sublimest poet of Greece has known how to avail himself. And, doubtless, a religious sentiment has accredited the tenet, that a huge gulf separated heaven and earth—a gulf proportioned to the moral distance at which holy spirits stand from creatures so corrupt and degraded as we are.

Nevertheless, we must confess ourselves unable to perceive that any such local distance from this world is necessary to constitute a region of purity and joy. If GOD is always in the full enjoyment of his own perfect holiness and bliss, although he is essentially present in every part of the universe—in the haunts of profligacy, in the charnel-house of corruption, and even in the abyss of penal fire, being secured by the excellency of his nature from the least touch of moral and physical evil—is it not possible for created spirits to be endowed with a nature that shall preserve them in a state of imperturbable bliss, whatever be their locality? They may carry heaven with them; they may, each individually, be surrounded with an atmosphere repellent of evil; and they may everywhere gaze on the glorified face of GOD. And such, we cannot doubt, is their actual condition while officiating for GOD upon the earth. That they execute many offices among us, and take no inconsiderable part in human affairs, is matter of revelation. We go to the sacred volume, and there we find them described as constantly ministering to the heirs of salvation. The little ones of the REDEEMER'S flock are their especial charge. They are pictured to us as encamping about the good man's habitation, to deliver him from dangers, and as bearing him up in their arms over the roughnesses of his pilgrim way. And in that remarkable discovery made to the servant of Elisha, of horses and chariots of fire surrounding the mount on which he dwelt, it is never hinted that these glorious legions had been recently sent down; but is expressly

stated that the eyes of the young man were unsealed at the prophet's prayer, and enabled to discern them.

Let us particularly attend to the account given by St. Luke of the magnificent apparition to the shepherds of Bethlehem on the evening after our LORD's nativity. From this it appears, that no sooner had the principal angel ended his message, than "suddenly there was with him a multitude of the heavenly host, praising GOD" in harmonious strains. In an instant, it would seem, the radiant forms of these celestial choristers became visible to the astonished herdsmen, and their noble symphonies audible. Such we conceive to be the just explanation of the passage. There is no reason whatever to suppose that on this great occasion the sons of GOD poured down from a region immensely remote from our earth, and were seen and heard by the shepherds because they had descended within the range of human senses. That angels may be within a few paces of us, and still elude our faculties, is universally allowed, and is instanced in the history of Balaam's encounter. May we not, then, believe that by a touch of Divine power the natural film was removed in an instant from the eyes of the Bethlehemites, and the natural obstruction from their ears; and so those bright beings, who are always thronging the air, became visible to human eyes; and those hymns, which they had probably been chanting from the moment of the SAVIOUR's birth, now first became audible to human ears? The change was not, as we apprehend, in the place or employment of the angels; they were not in a lower sphere than usual, nor newly engaged in evangelical minstrelsy; but the organs of the shepherds were all at once made capable of spiritual vision and hearing.

Now, if this be true, it will follow almost certainly, (and the fact is one of lively interest, and has many bearings,) that whenever the thin partition of our bodily vehicle falls down, we shall instantly find ourselves in the midst of spiritual beings. There will be no long journey to take in order to reach the mansions of the blessed; but the good man, as soon as ever death uncloses his eyes, and opens a new field to his perceptions, will see, with ineffable delight, that he is actually in paradise, and reposing on the bosom of CHRIST JESUS, among prophets and apostles, among angels and archangels, and all the glorious company of heaven.

When these heavenly messengers had proclaimed the restoration of peace between heaven and earth, they ascended to the realms of glory, leaving the shepherds in amazement and joy. With all haste they left their flocks, and ran into the city, where, as they had been directed, they "found Mary and Joseph, and the babe, lying in a manger." What avails the information of a SAVIOUR if we do not seek for him, and to what end does Heaven reveal the way of mercy to us if we do not leave all to embrace it? These shepherds no sooner heard "the glad tidings" communicated by the "heavenly host," than they quitted their flocks, over which they watched with so much care, and hastened into Bethlehem to worship the new-born King. In them we may perceive an example of imitation. Industry in our honest vocations is acceptable in the sight of GOD, and ensures his blessing; but there is a concern of still higher magnitude than this, and when the "glad tidings of salvation" through a Mediator are revealed to us, no plea of excuse for not attending to the call can be admitted. Yet how many will on slight pretences neglect the holy services of the sanctuary, where the REDEEMER is set forth in his incarnation, sufferings, and death, and prefer some trifling worldly advantage or frivolous amusement, to those things which concern their everlasting happiness! These pious shepherds, when they had found the SAVIOUR, gladly related all the particulars of the vision with which they had been favored, and the triumphant song of the angels. Their relation occasioned wonder in all who heard "these things," but it is doubtful whether it produced any other sensation. Many will feel astonishment at the marvellous condescension and grace of the REDEEMER, and be greatly affected when they read or hear the wonders which he hath wrought out for our salvation; but their religion goes no farther than this, and they have none of that lively gratitude which animated the shepherds of Bethlehem. Full of gladness at what they had discovered, these poor men were eager to tell the important news to every one they met; their hearts overflowed with joy that "GOD had visited his people," and they wanted all men to share with them in the blessing. Such will be the conduct of all who have a due apprehension of the truths contained in the gospel, and a proper affection for their fellow-creatures. They will not be content with receiving and rejoicing themselves in the glad tidings of pardon and peace, conveyed through a Mediator, but it will be their study and effort to make others partakers of the same.

BIRTH OF CHRIST.

Page 340.

Every Christian disciple will be solicitous to direct and invite others to his Master and it will be his delight to speak of all the wonderful things which he hath done. The conduct and language of the Psalmist will be his: "O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together." Psalm xxxiv. 3.

Our LORD, being come to fulfil all righteousness, submitted to the ordinance of circumcision, when the name of JESUS was given to him, according to the word of the angel. That of CHRIST, which is added to it, is a name of office, and signifies *anointed*, being equivalent to MESSIAH. The one implies his essential Deity, and is precisely nothing less than *God the Saviour;* the other relates to his consecration by the holy Spirit, as the *prophet*, *priest*, and *king* of his redeemed church; for all who bore those offices in ancient times, were consecrated thereto with holy oil.

The very names, therefore, of our SAVIOUR, express the divinity of his nature, "as GOD over all, blessed for ever;" and the reason of his humiliation, namely, that he might save his people from their sins, by being their head or representative.

At the appointed time the parents of our LORD repaired to Jerusalem to present the child in the temple, and to offer a sacrifice as the law prescribed: "a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons." On this occasion, a just and devout man, named Simeon, who had "waited for the consolation of Israel," being guided by the influence of the Spirit, entered the temple, and taking the holy child in his arms, he blessed GOD in a beautiful song of thanksgiving. "LORD," says the aged saint, "now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." One Anna, a prophetess, also, at the same time, "gave thanks unto the LORD, and spoke of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." But the nativity of the MESSIAH was not communicated to pious Israelites only, for though he was manifested in the first instance to them as the heirs of the promise made to Abraham, yet as he was also to be a "light of the Gentiles," and the "restorer of the ends of the earth," notice of this great event was given to certain "wise men of the east," who, probably, had been waiting also in faith for the day of redemption. It was expressly

THE MAGI.

predicted by Isaiah respecting the ascension of the Sun of righteousness upon the church, that the Gentiles should come to his light, and kings to the "brightness of his rising." Isaiah lx. 3.

These wise men came to Jerusalem soon after the birth of the MESSIAH, and immediately began to inquire where they might find the "new-born king of the Jews," declaring that they had "seen his star in the east, and were come to worship him." Matt. ii. 2. Herod, commonly called the Great, who then possessed the throne, was a usurper, and therefore this intelligence gave him considerable uneasiness. The idea which the Jews, for the most part, entertained respecting the MESSIAH, was that he should be a mighty temporal prince, by whom their independence would be regained, and the glory of their nation carried to the highest pitch. It is not to be wondered, then, that Herod on this occasion was greatly troubled. He instantly called the "chief priests and scribes of the people together, and demanded of them where CHRIST should be born." Being informed that prophecy had expressly named Bethlehem as the favored place, (Micah v. 2,) Herod called the wise men, and having learned from them what time the star appeared, that he might better be enabled to ascertain the age of the child, he sent them privately to Bethlehem, charging them that when they had found the object of their inquiry, to bring him word, "that he might go and worship him also." The crafty tyrant took these politic measures, that he might impose both upon these pious strangers and upon his own subjects, apprehending that if the birth of the MESSIAH were publicly known, it might lead to a revolt. The wise men, being thus dismissed, took the road to Bethlehem, and were greatly rejoiced to see the star guiding their course.

Thus directed they came to the house where the child was, and when they saw him they fell down before him and worshipped, presenting unto him various oblations, consisting of "gold, frankincense, and myrrh;" thus fulfilling another remarkable prophecy: "All they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the LORD." Isaiah lx. 6, compared with Psalm lxxii. 10.

This circumstance not only completed some remarkable prophecies concerning the MESSIAH, but it had the advantage of providing Joseph and Mary with the means of supporting themselves and child during their exile in Egypt, whither, by a direction of an angel, they fled with all haste, to avoid the sanguinary intention of Herod. That monster, when he found that he had been "mocked by the wise men," who, in compliance with the warning of the same angel, had departed to their own country, without calling at Jerusalem, was provoked beyond measure, and sent his soldiers to slay all the infants in Bethlehem and its neighborhood, of "two years old and younger."

But the holy JESUS, though so early the object of persecution, was secure in Egypt, where several of the most eminent saints who typified him had also found an asylum.

On the death of Herod, the angel of the LORD again appeared to Joseph, and directed him to return into his own country; but when the good man found that Archelaus reigned instead of his father, he was afraid to settle in Judea, and therefore fixed his abode at Nazareth.

"And the child grew, and waxed strong in [or by] the Spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of GOD was upon him." Luke ii. 40. In respect to his Deity he was possessed of infinite perfection, and could not receive any additional grace; but we are to consider that as he had now assumed human nature, that he might be in all things like unto us, therefore he grew in stature, and his natural faculties were gradually strengthened by the divine Spirit. It was necessary to the design of redemption, that he who bore the office of Mediator or representative, should in every circumstance and relation of life, except that culpable point for which he was to make atonement, be like unto the creatures whose nature he had assumed, and for whose salvation he stood engaged. Had the Deity been predominant and conspicuous, it would have destroyed the very intention and obligation of his office as REDEEMER, which called for the extremity of degradation as well as of suffering. The Son of GOD, therefore, though possessed of infinite wisdom, power, and perfection, was made a little child, grew onwards to youth, and passed through all the gradations of human life, that he might be not an exemplar of holiness merely, but that he might fully discharge every part of his office as our surety and representative.

Under the influence of the holy Spirit, the humanity of CHRIST increased in holiness and wisdom, and that in a degree which to ordinary spectators must have appeared

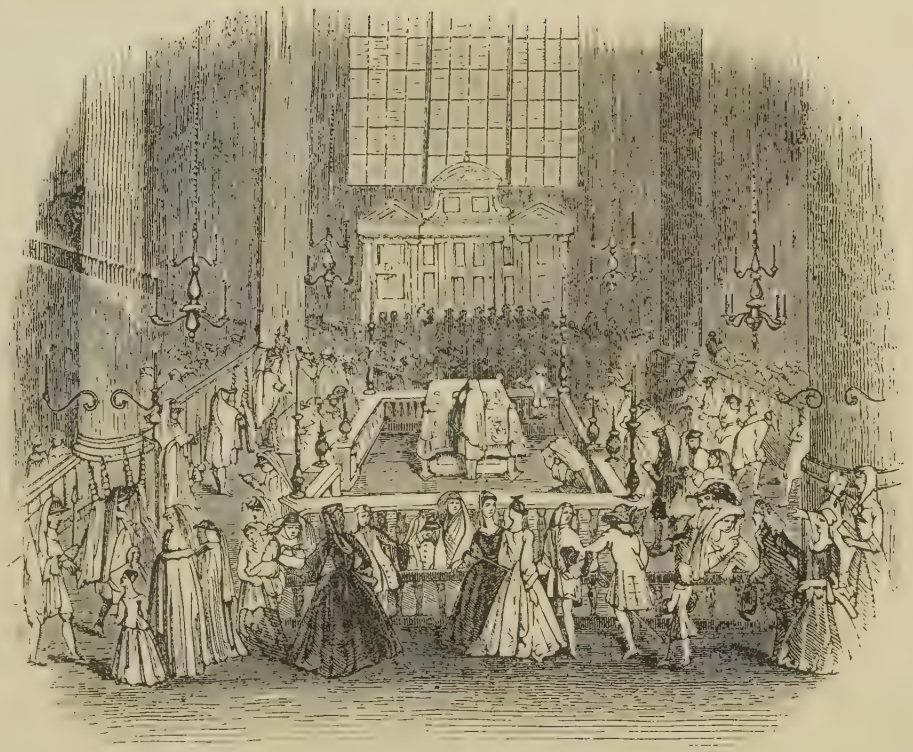
astonishing. At the age of twelve years he accompanied his parents to Jerusalem, at the feast of the passover. When the accustomed days were fulfilled, and they were returning, the child JESUS tarried behind in Jerusalem, and Joseph and Mary proceeded a day's journey before they missed him. Then in much anxiety they went back to Jerusalem, and on the third day after their departure, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions, to the great astonishment of all that heard and observed the quickness of his understanding, and the wisdom of his answers. When his mother gently remonstrated with him for occasioning them so much uneasiness by his absence, his answer was mysterious: "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Luke ii. 49. Mary knew that no business of her husband could have detained him, and therefore she treasured up this incident in her heart as a subject of holy meditation. This is the only particular recorded of the juvenile conduct of our SAVIOUR; and is it not one full of instruction? It manifests, in the first instance, his love for the courts of the LORD'S house, and in the second a holy zeal for his Father's glory. Happy will it be for young persons, if they study this divine example, and instead of associating with the idle, the licentious, and the profane, seek the path of religion, keep close to the house and worship of GOD, learn instruction from the wise and good, and cultivate the knowledge which they acquire by private meditation and fervent prayer.

The blessed Jesus went down with his parents to Nazareth, and was "subject unto them," for though he was their LORD, yet he became "obedient in all things," and was content to live in a state of poverty, working as a carpenter, which was the occupation of his reputed father. In this low and obscure condition, he continued till the thirtieth year of his age; for so long doubtless was it expedient that he should lead a private life, and pay an exact obedience to the law of GOD.

This was the age at which the Jewish priests entered upon the ministerial office, and John was of the same when he came from the wilderness and commenced his public labors. Though this does not bind the Christian church to the same practice, because the old has given way to a new dispensation, and we know that some of the apostles, and others in the New Testament, were much younger than this when they were commissioned, yet it certainly does strongly reprobate the conduct of those who run before they are sent, and engage precipitately in the ministerial work without due preparation.

At this age did JESUS break forth from his obscurity, and proceed to Jordan, where John his forerunner was baptizing, "to be baptized of him." Matt. iii. 13. John was surprised that the master should require baptism of the servant, and therefore he humbly declined administering it to him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" John's scruples arose from a sense of his inferiority to JESUS, "whose shoe's latchet," as he observed, "he was not worthy to unloose." John i. 27. But he submitted immediately on receiving this gentle command from the REDEEMER: "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." When JESUS ascended from the water, "the heavens opened unto him, and the Spirit of GOD descended in a bodily shape like a dove, and lighted upon him; and lo! there came a voice from heaven, saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. iii. 16, 17. Here we have all the three persons in the blessed Trinity: the Father giving testimony to the divinity of his Son, by an audible voice from heaven, without any visible appearance; the Son on the earth under the veil of humanity; and the Holy Ghost in the air descending on him in a glorious body of light, and with a tremulous motion like that of a dove. Being thus entered upon his great work, which was also a state of warfare against the great enemy of GOD and man, "he was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil." Matt. iv. 1.

In this dismal place he continued forty days and forty nights without food, and the human nature being nearly exhausted, he was tempted to distrust Providence, by commanding the stones to be made bread. But the artifice of Satan failed; for though the divine power that was in JESUS could have provided food in the wilderness, yet he, as man, submitted to the ordinary course of Providence, that his obedience might be perfect. Then the devil conveyed him into the holy city, and having set him upon a pinnacle of the temple, urged him to prove himself the Son of GOD, by casting himself down, quoting at the same time a remarkable text in the Psalms, which asserted that



READING OF THE LAW IN A MODERN JEWISH SYNAGOGUE.

VIEW IN THE MOUNTAINS OF JUDEA.

he should be safe in so doing; but here again the tempter was foiled by JESUS, who alleged another text, which declares, "Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy GOD." From hence he was borne away to the top of an exceeding high mountain, where Satan "showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," adding, with a most impudent effrontery, that he would give the whole world to JESUS if he would fall down and worship him. To this base offer the adversary received this indignant reply: "Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the LORD thy GOD, and him only shalt thou serve." This completed the conquest, for the devil, being baffled at every point, and having nothing more to propose, gave up the contest and fled. Thus was our LORD "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin," (Heb. iv. 15,) that we might be encouraged by his example to resist the devil, and to take as he did for our weapons, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of GOD." Ephes. vi. 17.

Having gained this great victory, the angels of GOD, who had doubtless been anxious spectators of the conflict, came with joy and ministered unto him.

This trial being past, JESUS entered upon his public labors, by gathering a few disciples; the first of whom were Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, and John the Evangelist. They had been both disciples of the Baptist, by whose testimony they were led to follow JESUS. The former of these, on meeting with his brother, informed him "that they had found the MESSIAH," (John i. 41,) which induced Peter also to make one of their number. Their report brought others to JESUS, but all these disciples were taken from the meanest occupations, and the greater part of them were fishermen. Thus did divine wisdom pass by the great and the learned, the rich and the powerful, that this great work might clearly appear not to be the effect of human skill, contrivance, and policy, but the immediate operation of GOD.

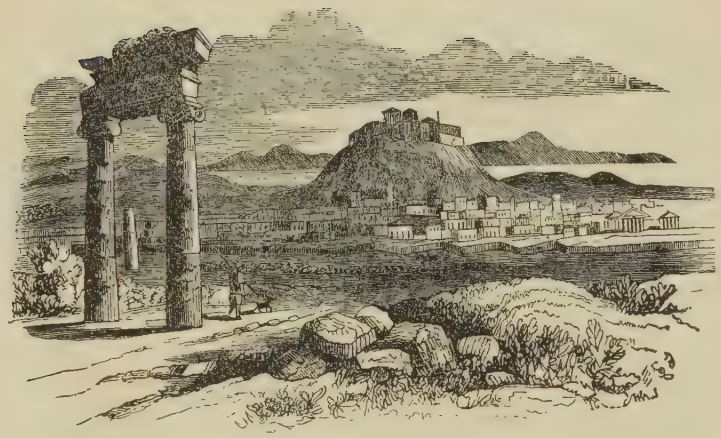
These feeble instruments were chosen to confound the wise, and to break down, through the mighty influence of the Holy Spirit, the stupendous fabric of pagan superstition. Of such men was the Christian church first composed, and such were its original preachers, who had to oppose all the learning and sophistry, not only of their countrymen, but of Athens and Rome, and that at a period when human wisdom and eloquence were generally cultivated. Called by GOD, and inspired by his grace, they went forth, and the powers of darkness fell before them. What evidence can be stronger than this in behalf of the divine origin of the Christian religion, and the essential deity of its founder? When we see JESUS, a poor and obscure person, on the banks of the Jordan, accompanied by two or three fishermen, as mean in appearance as himself, and then transport our minds into a succeeding period, and contemplate the systems of ages overcome by the sublime doctrine of the same JESUS, through the mere preaching of his unlearned followers, what must be the conclusion of a candid mind, but that this was the work of GOD?

JESUS made use of no solicitations, no promises, to win these men over to his cause, though if he had, it would be difficult to account for his making such a choice in preference to the wealthy and ambitious Jews. The first disciples followed him of their own motion, prompted merely by the high account of him which they had heard from their former master, John the Baptist. By their report others were led to follow him; and the holiness of his life, the excellence of his doctrine, and the wonders which they witnessed, riveted their attachment. It is clear, indeed, that they were not free from the carnal prejudices entertained by the rest of the Jews, respecting the nature of the MESSIAH's kingdom, and it was not till after his resurrection that they obtained more spiritual notions.

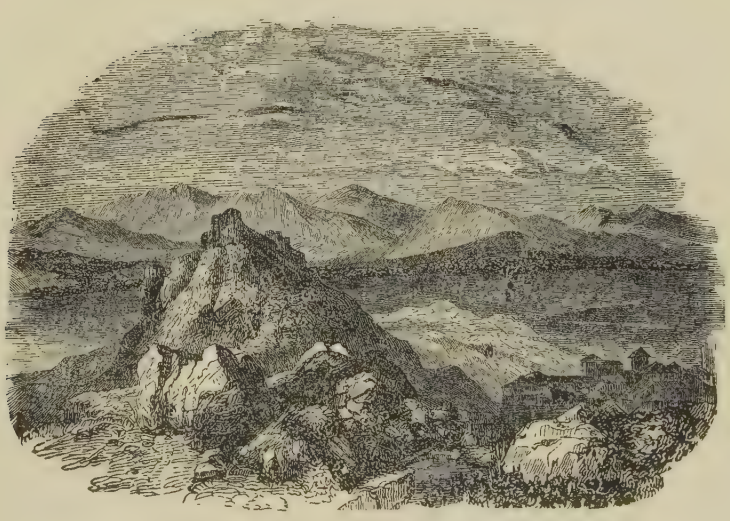
But JESUS himself always corrected these corrupt ideas whenever they were expressed; and though his disciples were slow to believe, and were dull of apprehension, yet all his discourses were calculated to convince them that "his kingdom, so far from being of this world," was diametrically opposed to temporal grandeur, fashion, and riches.

In his choice, therefore, of disciples, and in their uniform attachment to him, we must perceive an absolute disinterestedness, wholly exempt from worldly craft or designing collusion.

With these poor followers (and those who afterwards joined him were not more respectable, in the world's esteem) did JESUS enter upon the sphere of his public ministration, and begin to preach the Gospel, or the "glad tidings of salvation." It is true, he was armed with a divine power, and wrought numerous miracles to enforce his



VIEW OF ATHENS.



THE AREOPAGUS OF MARS HILL, AT ATHENS.

doctrine and to confirm his authority, but these supernatural wonders were not such as tended to dazzle men's minds with a notion that he wanted to set up a temporal dominion, or to deliver Judea from the Roman yoke. All his miracles were acts of kindness and benevolence to poor and afflicted objects, or to show his power as the Son of GOD.

A striking difference distinguished the miracles of JESUS from those which had been wrought by holy men of old, as well as those which were performed by his own disciples. The prophets and apostles professedly acted by a commission from GOD, and the latter always performed their miracles in the name of JESUS CHRIST. But our blessed LORD, in healing the sick, expelling demons, restoring sight to the blind, or raising the dead, invariably acted by virtue of his own power and authority.

The beginning of his miracles was at Cana, in Galilee, where at a marriage feast he turned water into wine; not to encourage licentiousness, as those infidels pretend

CANA. The modern Village.

who would themselves apologize for intemperance in one of their own tribe, but to sanctify a holy institution, and to encourage hospitality.

From hence he went up to Jerusalem to the passover, where, on finding the temple profaned by persons who carried on traffic therein, his zeal was kindled, and he drove them out with a scourge, saying, "Take these things hence: make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." John ii. 16.

One of the fathers, (St. Jerome,) with much ingenuity, considers this action of our LORD's as one of the greatest in his whole life; and it must be allowed very extraordinary, that a person so obscure, without any authority from the Sanhedrim, should take upon him to reform this abuse, and that so many persons, instead of resisting him, should fly from his presence in terror, leaving their wares behind them. But in thus asserting the honor of GOD, and rescuing his holy temple from profanation, JESUS put forth his divine power, against which all human strength was ineffectual. His disciples, who beheld the act, were themselves astonished, but they soon remembered that it was no more than a fulfilment of this divine prediction: "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." Ps. lxix. 10; John iii. 16. Thus are we taught at once to apply the psalms, not merely to the circumstances of David, or to ancient Israel, but to those of CHRIST and his church.

This transaction, as well as his other miracles, must have occasioned no small observation among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, particularly in those who filled stations of public authority. They noticed the fame of this extraordinary reformer indeed,

CHRIST HEALING THE SICK.

but not with any desire to profit by his doctrine. The "rulers and the Pharisees" would not believe that "any good could come out of Nazareth," or that he was entitled to respect who condescended to instruct and to relieve the poor, and who pronounced the sharpest censures upon their pride, bigotry, and hypocrisy. The great body of these men were the bitter enemies of our LORD, because he exposed their corrupt system of self-righteousness. But there was one among them who possessed a more ingenuous mind, and was not willing to condemn either the person or the doctrine of JESUS without inquiry. This was Nicodemus, a member of the great Sanhedrim, and a man of considerable note and influence among the Pharisees. The fame of JESUS made a deep impression upon him, and he was desirous of hearing from his own lips those principles which, though some might applaud, the greater part agreed to condemn. Not willing, however, to expose himself to the resentment of his brethren, and afraid of incurring any degree of contempt by stooping so low as to confer with the son of a mechanic, Nicodemus made this visit under the convenient shade of the night. It is plain that fear prevailed in the mind of this eminent ruler, and led him to adopt the dark and silent hour for this conference. But JESUS, who saw that amidst this weakness the mind of the man was upright, and that sincerity actuated him to seek his lowly dwelling, gave him a courteous reception, and readily, though seemingly in an abrupt manner, entered upon the important doctrine of regeneration. Nicodemus was astonished when our LORD declared that, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of GOD." John iii. 3. Though "a master in Israel," or one who held the important office of teaching others, he was ignorant of this fundamental principle of religion, that the heart and affections of a man must be changed, or renewed, before he can be qualified for a state of holiness. The doctrine taught by JESUS CHRIST was not in itself new, for it was that which the prophets had often inculcated, and which the ceremonies of the Mosaic ritual plainly expressed. But the Pharisees having substituted outward observances and a moral righteousness for that "which is of GOD by faith," as sufficient for justification, it was necessary to destroy the fatal delusion by urging the indispensable necessity of a renovation of heart.

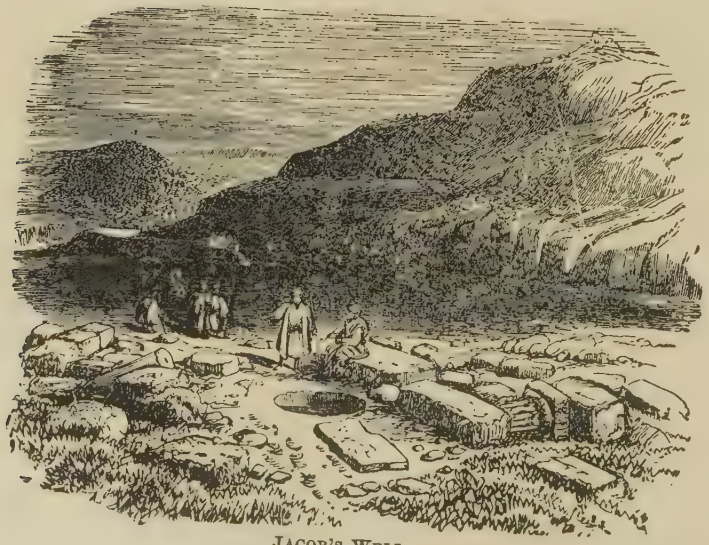
Our SAVIOUR, having explained this great truth to Nicodemus, proceeded to declare his divinity and the intent of his mission, observing, that the "serpent which Moses lifted up in the wilderness" typified the death of the MESSIAH, and the benefits which should result from it to those who truly believe in him.

After this remarkable conference, which certainly made a convert of Nicodemus, JESUS went into other parts of Judea, accompanied by his disciples, where they baptized. From thence he proceeded to Galilee, and on the way stopped by the side of a well near Sychar, a city of Samaria; and being much fatigued with the journey, he sent his disciples into the city to purchase provisions. Thus He who was the bread of life, suffered, in this state of humiliation, hunger and thirst, pain and weariness. While he sat by the side of the well, a Samaritan woman came thither to draw water; and JESUS asked her for some to quench his thirst. There was a rooted enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans, insomuch that they would not deal with one another. The woman could not but express her surprise that JESUS, whose dress indicated his country, should ask water of her, who was one of Samaria. Our LORD, full of grace and condescension, replied, "If thou knewest the gift of GOD, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Thus did he apply natural objects that lay immediately before him, to introduce the nature, and to illustrate the excellence of spiritual blessings.

When our LORD further declared the inestimable value of this water, meaning thereby the sanctifying gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, and of which, whosoever "drinketh, shall never thirst," the poor woman expressed her desire of having some, but was still ignorant of the spiritual signification of the metaphor. To convince her of his omniscience, and to awaken in her mind a sense of her sinfulness, JESUS told her to "fetch her husband," and when she confessed that she had none, he replied, "Thou hast said truly, for thou hast had five husbands; and he with whom thou now livest is not thine husband." The woman, no longer doubting that this was a prophet, put a question to him, which was much agitated between the Jews and Samaritans, about the proper place where men ought to worship; Jerusalem or Gerizim. Though our LORD gave the preference to Jerusalem, yet he told her that the time was now ap-

NAZARETH.

SYCHAR, OR NAPOLOSE.



JACOB'S WELL.

proaching when all the ceremonial observances of both places should cease, and give way to a purer service, "for GOD is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

The conversation at last turned upon the MESSIAH, who was not more the expectation of the Jews than of the Samaritans; and the woman having expressed her belief that when he should come he would instruct them in all things, JESUS replied at once, "I that speak unto thee am He."

On hearing this she left her water-pot and hastened into the city to communicate the wonderful tidings; and soon after she was gone the disciples came, bringing provisions, of which they urged their Master to partake; but he, being intent upon his great errand, answered, that he had meat to eat which they knew not of. While they were wondering at his expressions, the Samaritans were flocking from the city, being attracted by the declaration of the woman, "Come, see a man which told me all that ever I did."

At the earnest request of the Samaritans, he abode with them two days, and many of them became sincere converts; "saying unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the CHRIST, the SAVIOUR of the world."

Though we may give our assent to the testimony which others bear to the divine authority of CHRIST; though we may credit all that has been recorded of him, and even allow that he is the MESSIAH, yet nothing short of faith in him, and a vital communion with him, as our SAVIOUR, will avail to our justification.

Like the glorious luminary, to whom he has been fitly compared, JESUS was indefatigable in his course of righteousness and benevolence. He went constantly about doing good, in healing the natural and moral maladies of mankind. From Samaria, where the spiritual harvest had been abundant, he proceeded into Galilee, in most parts of which country he performed astonishing miracles, and gained many converts. But in his own city of Nazareth he was treated with contempt, as the "son of Joseph the carpenter;" (Matt. xiii. 55;) so truly was that proverb verified, that "a prophet is not without honor except in his own country." Matt. v. 57. Having sharply but justly reproved the bigoted Nazarenes for their blindness and obstinacy, they proceeded to the most violent outrage against his person, hurrying him to the brow of a precipice with an intent of hurling him down headlong. But his time was not yet come; and, therefore, disarming the infatuated wretches of power, he miraculously "passed through the midst of them and went his way."

He appears to have resided longer at Capernaum than at any other place. This city lay upon the coast of the sea of Tiberias, on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali, and thus was fulfilled that striking prediction of the prophet Isaiah: "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light: and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up." Isaiah ix. 1, 2. In Galilee his greatest works were performed; here he collected the principal number, if not the whole of his apostles, and in that country his labors were crowned with most success.

Yet he constantly attended the great feasts at Jerusalem, on which occasions he usually proclaimed himself more directly as the MESSIAH, appealing for the proof that he was so, to the works which he performed. But so infatuated were the Jewish people with the expectation of a temporal prince, possessed of worldly glory and power, that they resisted even this evidence, and though they beheld devils subject to him, the most obstinate diseases flying at his word, and even death robbed of its prey at his command, they could not receive him. He was followed indeed by immense crowds, who were eager to hear the doctrines which he preached, to see the miracles which he wrought, and to partake of those blessings which he so freely bestowed; yet the number of his real disciples was but small. Few attached themselves sincerely to him in a firm persuasion that he was the SON of GOD, and of those few scarcely any were above the common station of life.

By the two great sects into which the Jewish people were split, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, he was violently opposed. The former affected an uncommon reverence for the sacred writings and the law of Moses, but they added thereto an equal if not a greater regard for certain traditions which encumbered religion with observances unwarranted by the word of GOD. To these they adhered with a scrupulous exactness, while they neglected the "weighty matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." Matt. xxiii. 23. Upon these men our LORD was very severe, and he warned

CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

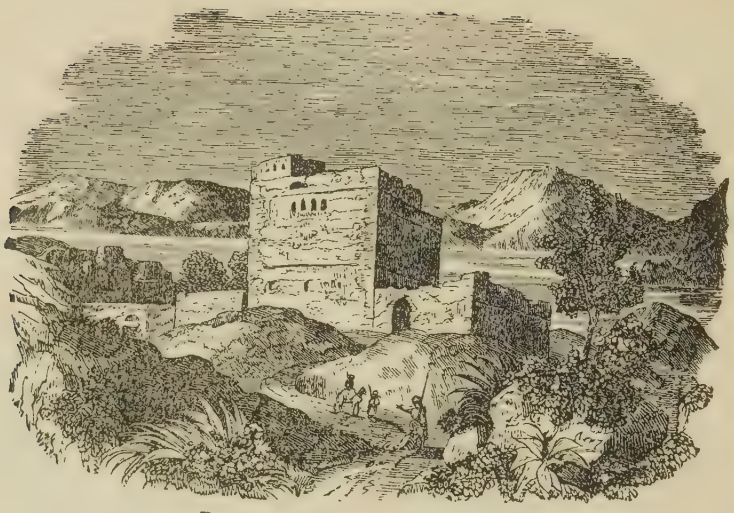
ne people, and particularly his own disciples, against their corruptions in the strongest terms. The Sadducees were more ancient than the Pharisees; and derived their name either from *Sedec*, which signifies *Justice*, or from a certain Jewish teacher called *Sadoc*. They were distinguished by holding the Pentateuch, or the writings of Moses, in preference to all the other Scriptures; and because in those books there are but very obscure intimations of a future state, and the appearance of angels is always described as being under a human form, therefore they rejected the doctrine of the resurrection, and denied the existence of spirits. Whatever might be the character of the first Sadducees, it is certain that those in our SAVIOUR's time were Epicureans in principle, and licentious in practice. Though these two sects bore the most malignant hatred against each other, they united in persecuting JESUS CHRIST as their common enemy. His doctrine was totally opposite to the wretched dogmas of the Pharisees, which placed all righteousness in frivolous rites and ceremonies; and to the skeptical principles of the Sadducees, which by tending to destroy all hope or fear of a future state, encouraged immorality and atheism.

In opposition to the Pharisees, our LORD preached the necessity of repentance, and an inward conformity to the law of GOD, but not to the neglect of those outward observances which were of perpetual obligation. He asserted that to become heirs of the kingdom of GOD, men must become as "little children," that is, they must renounce all their preconceived notions of moral worth, and submit their wills and understandings to be guided by the Spirit of truth. It was his constant theme that the broken and the contrite heart alone was acceptable in the sight of GOD, and that those who trusted in their own righteousness, or in a fancied notion that they were able to perform such an exact course of obedience as the divine law required, were "far," or at the most remote distance from the kingdom of GOD. He taught this great truth, that all men were sinners, and consequently that none could be justified or exalted to the divine favor, but those who were humbled or abased in their own estimation. Persons who felt their lost condition, and were heavy laden, or oppressed with a sense of their sins, he encouraged and invited to come to him with a promise of pardon, peace, and eternal life. It happened that many of those who were pricked to the heart by his discourses, and came to him as the only physician that could pour balm into their souls, were peculiarly odious to the proud and assuming Pharisees. Most of these were publicans, or tax-gatherers, and harlots. On these outcasts his preaching was abundantly successful; nor did he ever reproach any of them when they came to him —though on the precise and superstitious Pharisees he denounced the heaviest judgments. For this conduct he was greatly vilified, and it was taken as an occasion to prejudice the people against him, that "he did eat with publicans and sinners." Matt. ix. 11. But this was his glory. Herein did he exactly fulfil the most essential part of his great errand into our world, which was "to seek and to save those who were lost." Luke xix. 10. His own life, however, was unspotted; and though he never refused any invitation when it was made to him, yet in his deportment he was always correct, so that the prying and designing eyes of the Pharisees never could frame any other accusation against him, than "that he was a friend to publicans and sinners," (Luke vii. 34,) and that "he performed works of mercy on the Sabbath-day." John v. 6.

The Pharisees were rigid enough in observing ceremonies, in keeping at a distance from their fellow-sinners, whom they did not think worthy of exhortation, and in paying an outward respect to the Sabbath. But charity made no part of their creed, and therefore no liberality could be expected in their practice. Our LORD taught that works of righteousness are more than burnt-sacrifices, and that the exercise of benevolence is infinitely more acceptable in the sight of GOD, than ceremonies by which no man is profited. This rendered him and his doctrine odious to these bigoted and proud sectaries. But there was another particular in his preaching which gave them great offence, and increased their resentment against him.

The ancient prophets in their descriptions of the MESSIAH had expressly declared, that he "should gather all nations;" (Isaiah lxvi. 18;) that "he should have the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession;" (Psalm ii. 8;) that "the Gentiles should come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising;"

* BETHESDA, (*the house of mercy,*) a pool with a public bath, north of the temple at Jerusalem, and celebrated for miraculous healing at the time of our SAVIOUR. John v. 2. Our engraving represents the remains of the pool of Bethesda.



Ruins of Jericho. *Matt.* xx. 29–34.

The Remains of the Ancient Pool at Bethesda.

UNIVERSAL BENEVOLENCE.—THE WIDOW'S MITE.

(Isaiah lx. 3;) and that "in him all families of the earth should be blessed." Gen xii. 3. The doctrine and the conduct of our LORD corresponded with these predictions: for though he declared that he was sent in the first place to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," (Matt. xv. 24,) yet he graciously received and relieved strangers, preached in Samaria, healed the Syro-Phenician's child, and inculcated the broad principle of universal benevolence, founded upon the infinite extent of his redemption.

This was diametrically opposite to the notions of all the Jews of whatever sect; and even his own disciples, who lived in habits of the greatest intimacy with him, and had not only his instructions but his example to teach them better, were not brought to embrace and to act upon this great truth till after his ascension. Every part of our LORD's doctrine was counter to the prevalent principles of his degenerate countrymen, and this affords, in consequence, an invincible evidence of the truth of his mission, even though upon this particular ancient prophecy had been silent. A designing man would have courted followers by flattering their prejudices, or by holding out to them some prospect of temporal advantages. JESUS CHRIST, by opposing the corruptions of the Jews, and declaring that "in this world his disciples must experience tribulation," (John xvi. 33,) acted in a manner which every man of carnal policy would have con-

demned as the extreme point of madness. Nor were the miracles which he wrought such as men of worldly wisdom would have recommended as the best calculated to answer the purposes of ambition. He restored sight to the blind, he healed numerous diseases, expelled demons from the possessed, fed many thousands at once by a miraculous multiplication of a few loaves and fishes, stilled at a word the most violent tempest, and raised the dead to life, even after they had been deposited in the tomb; yet in all these miracles he sought no glory. They were not wrought for the benefit of the great and affluent men of the world, but mostly for the poor and obscure. He usually commanded those whom he healed to be silent in his praise; and when he had performed a variety of these beneficent actions, it was his custom to retire privately from the applauding multitude to some secret place, where he might indulge himself in meditation and prayer. What others eagerly court as the highest pitch of human happiness, popular esteem, he shunned with the most sedulous care and solicitude. This was evident in his conduct when the people who had been miraculously fed by his bounty were determined to make him a king by force, and to take up arms in his favor as the MESSIAH. JESUS no sooner perceived their design than he instantly sent off his disciples by sea, that they might not be led away by the same spirit; and when they were gone, he dismissed the multitudes with authority, after which he "went up into the mountain to pray." One who had a wish to establish a kingdom in this world would have gladly seized so favorable an opportunity, and there can be little doubt, from what we read of the refractory temper of the Jewish nation, that they would readily have flocked to his standard, if he had chosen to avow himself a temporal prince. But his whole course of life, all that he taught, and all that he performed, manifested a superiority to the world, and an opposition to those things in which misguided men place their happiness. His aim was to raise the minds of his

CHRIST CURING THE BLIND.

followers above this sinful and perishable state, to inspire them with a noble contempt of corruptible riches, and an earnest desire after those heavenly graces which will endure for ever.

The manner in which our blessed SAVIOUR inculcated his doctrine was by parables; and nothing can be more beautiful or instructive, more pregnant with important truths, or more applicable to the common ideas and concerns of mankind, than these figurative representations. This method of instruction is of very great antiquity, and there can be no doubt of its being admirably adapted to excite attention, and to produce conviction. It tends to engage attention by its pleasantness, and to produce conviction by bringing truth home to the hearer in a familiar description of some natural circumstance, the moral inference of which is discerned instantly without the pains of labored induction. It is a method not only well adapted to please the mind, by conveying instruction clearly and easily, but also of administering correction without giving offence. Many of our LORD's parables were designed to reprove the blindness and obstinacy of the Jewish nation, and the hypocrisy and superstition of the Pharisees. A plain and direct discourse might only have irritated them the more against him, and therefore he couched their guilt and his reproof under some parabolical representation. This was the case with respect to the parable of the fig-tree, in which the unfruitful and ungrateful state of the Jews was most forcibly described, as well as the judgment which would fall upon them. In the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, how strikingly does our LORD vindicate the calling of the Gentiles, and the unreasonableness of the Jews in objecting to so gracious a dispensation! That of the marriage supper is a plain representation of the dereliction of the Jews through their own impenitence and unbelief, and the display of GOD's love to the Gentiles.

Other parables have a more general tendency, and may be applied to persons of every age and country; as that of the Pharisee and Publican, the Wheat and the Tares, the

THE TEN VIRGINS.

Ten Virgins, the Prodigal Son, and (if that be a parable) the awful story of Dives and Lazarus.

It would not only be pleasing but profitable to consider these beautiful narratives in order, and to inquire into the doctrines which they convey, as well as the practical lessons which may be learned from them. But our limits forbid us this pleasure, nor indeed can we enter so minutely into the detail of our blessed REDEEMER's life as the subject requires. For though his public course did not much exceed three years, yet that period was filled with circumstances of the greatest magnitude, so as to render the history of them infinitely more momentous than that of the world, and of all the em-

pires which have flourished therein. It ought not, however, to pass unnoticed, that the parabolical mode of instruction adopted by our LORD, was another circumstance in which he fulfilled what had been spoken of him in the Old Testament. St. Matthew quotes the passage from the seventy-eighth Psalm, in these words: "All these things spake JESUS unto the multitude in parables: and without a parable spake he not unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." Matt. xiii. 34, 35. In this view then the parables are of still greater importance, as furnishing an additional argument for the truth of Christianity, since it was expressly foretold that the MESSIAH should be distinguished by the use of them.*

As a "preacher of righteousness," JESUS eminently excelled all that had preceded him, for his eloquence was divine, and he spake "as one having authority, and not as the scribes," (Matt. vii. 29,) who grounded all they had to advance upon the vague traditions of the elders. The discourses of our SAVIOUR were directed to the heart; they struck at the very root of all moral evil, by showing the absolute necessity of a renovated mind, which pre-supposes that all are by nature corrupt; and they pointed out the only way by which that change can be effected, that is, by divine grace, which must be sought for in faith and prayer. The people had never been used to this kind of instruction. Their blind guides had commanded them to receive their dictates without assigning any satisfactory reasons why they were entitled to obedience. But the doctrine of our SAVIOUR was wholly consistent with the word of GOD, the uncorrupted code of their religion, and it had evidently for its great object the present and future happiness of mankind. There was nothing perplexed, forbidding, or burdensome in what JESUS taught; but everything was plain, endearing, and delightful. Well therefore might he call "his yoke easy, and his burden light," (Matt. xi. 30,) for it freed the minds of those who received it from the "bondage of the law," from the fear of death, and the dread of hell. It opened to their view the most brilliant and substantial joys beyond the grave; it rendered the path of duty certain, and settled faith upon

* THE PARABLES.—While we thankfully receive the general instructions of our LORD, and strive, in dependance upon divine grace, to regulate our conduct thereby, let us learn to set a special value on the excellent and impressive illustrations which his parables afford. Let us peruse them frequently, seriously, and attentively. Let us diligently compare them with the observations which he himself makes upon them, and also with the general tenor of his doctrine. But above all, let us frequently implore a right understanding of them by the teaching of his holy Spirit; that they may be conducive to the important end of making us "wise unto salvation through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS." This object they are admirably calculated to promote under the direction of that Spirit, and cannot therefore be too highly valued, in connexion with fervent prayer for his illuminating grace. Let us, in the next place, admire and endeavor to imitate the wisdom of our LORD, not only in making natural objects subservient to spiritual instruction, but in a guarded and cautious intimation of spiritual truths to those whose minds are not prepared for a full and copious development of them. This is a direction which is perhaps of equal importance both to the minister of the word and to the private Christian. To the former it is often a matter of no small moment, that he should conciliate the minds of his hearers in every way that is consistent with strict fidelity in the discharge of his ministerial functions; declaring indeed to the sinner the awful danger to which he is exposed; but at the same time endeavoring to win him over to CHRIST by persuasive and affectionate arguments, such as may reach his understanding, and, under the Divine blessing, find their way to his inmost heart—rather than abruptly attacking his strongest prejudices, and needlessly irritating the worst passions of the soul. It may be truly said of our SAVIOUR, that in delivering instruction to his followers, he "drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love;" and that in every successive stage of that instruction, he "spake the word unto them as they were able to bear it." To the private Christian it is also highly important that he should follow the example of his divine Master, in having respect to times and seasons, and especially to the particular circle in which he is placed. Never, indeed, should he be ashamed of his Master, or afraid to bear testimony to the importance of vital godliness: but he needs, and should therefore diligently seek, much wisdom from above, to enable him so to speak, and so to time his observations, that he may not indiscreetly injure instead of promoting the cause of his GOD and SAVIOUR, and the interests of those whose salvation he has at heart. Finally, in contemplating the parables of our LORD, let us seek and pray that we may know more of our LORD himself. From him those heavenly instructions proceed; concerning him they frequently treat: and while they direct our attention to his character, his purposes, his kingdom, and his everlasting glory, they commend him to our reverence, our admiration, our gratitude, and our love, as "made of GOD," unto those who believe in his name, "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." At the same time they no less clearly inform us, that if we reject him as our SAVIOUR, and trust to anything instead of him for our acceptance with GOD, and our admission to future glory, he will reject us in the day when he shall come to judge the world in righteousness, and will appoint us our portion in the dismal regions of eternal death

a sure foundation; it had, in short, everything which could be necessary to render man socially useful and personally happy.

The important principle that the future state is one of retribution, according to the spiritual condition and conduct of men in this probationary world, was little, if at all, understood, till our SAVIOUR arose and threw the strong light of certainty upon the awful subject. He taught not only the soul's immortality, but the doctrine of a resurrection and of a final judgment, when all the dead shall appear at the bar of GOD "to be judged every man according to his works."

Now if he had done no more than this; if he had only confined his labors to the single point of preaching and illustrating these momentous points, we should have had every reason imaginable to cherish his memory with reverence, and to glory in being called by his name. But he did far more than this. He confirmed these great doctrines by corresponding wonders, which no created being could perform in his own power; he recalled the departed spirit to reanimate the clay-cold corpse, and at a word caused the dead body of Lazarus to issue from the tomb, where it had lain three days. Well might he say on that occasion to the weeping sister of the deceased: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." John xi. 25, 26.

When we view JESUS at the grave of Lazarus "weeping," we admire the compassionate, sympathizing REDEEMER, moved at the ravages occasioned by sin and death—but when we hear him pronounce these energetic words, "Come forth!" we are filled with awe, and look upon him with astonishment as the DEITY in human form. Who but GOD ever pronounced such a command? who but GOD would immediately have been obeyed? The word was no sooner uttered than death delivered up its prey, and Lazarus arose from the tomb. By acts like these, JESUS not only showed his omnipotence, but the absolute certainty of a general resurrection of the dead.

This miracle was performed at Bethany, not far from Jerusalem, and but a little while before the crucifixion of our LORD. The circumstance was witnessed by a great number of spectators, some of whom believed, but others were so obstinately chained down under the force of prejudice, that "they would not believe in the divine mission of JESUS, though they had seen him raise one from the dead." Luke xvi. 31. These infidels, upon whom miracles had no effect, went and reported what they had seen to the chief priests and Pharisees, who instantly "called a council and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation."

Worldly policy is commonly regardless of truth or justice. These men pretended to be afraid that the design of JESUS was to excite a revolt, though his conduct and preaching were quite different from such a project. But their own confession that he "did many miracles," sufficiently convicts them of the basest injustice. Those mighty works, they ought to have known, could not be the effect of any thing short of divine power, for neither human craft nor diabolical agency could restore a man to life, after having lain in the grave three days.

The most inveterate enemies of truth and righteousness, however, are sometimes compelled to bear their testimony in behalf of the very cause which they oppose and persecute with the greatest malignity. Thus the members of the Jewish council, assembled to plot the death of JESUS, could not but acknowledge that "he did many miracles;" and the chief of them, Caiaphas, the high priest, uttered this remarkable prophecy, while he thought only of venting his own evil machination: "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." The evangelist who records the account of this confederacy, thus explains the saying of Caiaphas: "And this spake he not of himself, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that JESUS should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of GOD that were scattered abroad." John xi. 47, 52.

The advice of the high priest prevailed, and from that day the death of JESUS was determined.

We have seen the lowly REDEEMER studiously avoiding popularity, refusing all splendid appearances, and retiring from an applauding multitude to indulge himself in the exercises of private devotion. His conduct was a complete illustration of his own assertion, that "he was come not to be ministered unto, but to minister," (Matt.

RAISING OF LAZARUS.

BETHANY.

xx. 28,) and likewise of that emphatic declaration which he made to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world" John xviii. 36.

But as he was now drawing to the close of his life, he began to assume the regal and judicial authority.

The passover being nigh at hand, he proceeded towards Jerusalem, and coming to the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples to a neighboring village to fetch a young ass which they should find there with its dam. They were also told that if the owner should ask them any questions, they were to answer that the LORD had need of her, upon which he would readily deliver the ass unto them. They went as directed, and found all things agreeable to what their master had said. On this humble animal did JESUS make his entry into Jerusalem, accompanied by great multitudes

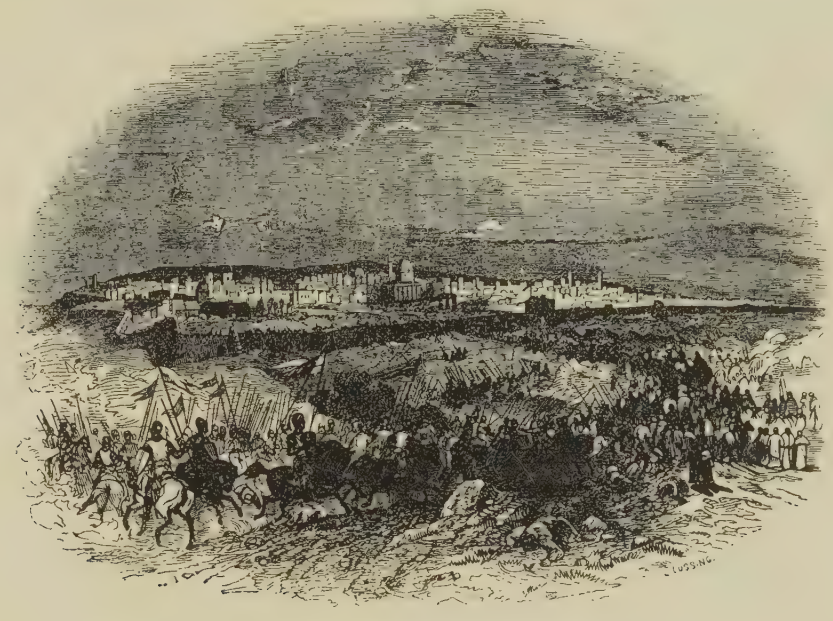
ORDINARY COSTUME OF THE JEWS.

who were attracted by the fame of his miracles. Some of them, out of reverence to his person, spread their garments in the road, while others cut down branches from the trees and cast them in the way. The persuasion of his being the MESSIAH, seems to have been general among the people who thus attended him, for they cried before him, "Hosanna to the son of David; blessed is the KING that cometh in the name of the LORD; peace in heaven and glory in the highest." Matt. xxi. 9; Luke xix. 38.

Thus remarkably was accomplished the prediction of Zechariah: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy KING cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Zech. ix. 9.

But miracles and prophecies were insufficient to open the eyes of the malevolent Pharisees. This triumphant procession and the acclamations of the people only filled their minds with envy and rage. "We prevail nothing," say they; "the world is gone after him." John xii. 19.

How different were the emotions which at this moment agitated the bosom of our LORD! Regardless of the applauses with which he was welcomed by the crowd, and of the steps that were plotting against him by his enemies, his soul was filled with compassion for the city which appeared in view. He beheld Jerusalem, the highly favored city of GOD, sunk into infidelity and corruption; its cup of iniquities nearly running over; and its destruction as inevitable. As he contemplated the melancholy prospect, his heart was overcharged with grief, and he wept, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou," wicked as thou art, "at least in this thy day," while there was grace left for thee, "the things which belong unto thy peace," thou mightest even yet have been saved, "but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies (the Romans) shall cast a trench round about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Luke xix. 42—44.



CRUSADERS APPROACHING JERUSALEM.

This prophecy was fulfilled in the exactest manner, as appears from the affecting history of Josephus, the Jewish historian. The Romans pitched their tents upon the very mount where CHRIST delivered this prediction, and in three days Titus compassed the whole city round with a trench, or wall, about four miles in length, which *kept the inhabitants in so strictly on every side* as to prevent all possibility of escape. When the city was taken, it *was laid even with the ground*, except three towers which were preserved as monuments of the Roman power, and the very foundation stones of the temple were ploughed up, so that not *one was left* standing *upon another*.

As this entry of our SAVIOUR indicated his regal authority, so he proceeded to exercise it in a judicial manner immediately after his arrival; for, proceeding to the temple, he cast out, as he had done once before, those who profaned that holy place by their merchandise.

To show that he had a divine power to perform these things, "the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them." Matt. xxi. 14. These miraculous actions filled the city with astonishment. The people crowded to see this extraordinary personage out of curiosity; some believed in sincerity of heart, others were ready to receive him as the MESSIAH, or a deliverer in a temporal sense, and the very children were taught to cry "Hosanna to the Son of David," but the rulers and the Pharisees were enraged beyond measure. Various schemes were devised for his destruction, but a dread of the people, who held him in great veneration, restrained the hands of his enemies from attacking him openly. Some of these very rulers were persuaded that he was the MESSIAH, but they were afraid to avow their conviction lest they should be excommunicated, "loving the praise of men more than the praise of GOD." John xii. 43.

Are there not numbers of a similar description among those who are called Christians? They believe in their hearts that JESUS is the CHRIST, that the Gospel is true, that there is no other method of salvation than by faith in the REDEEMER, and that "without holiness no man shall see the LORD;" yet these same persons are ashamed to avow their principles and to act upon them. They know that the maxims and practices of the world are but very rarely agreeable to the precepts and example of CHRIST, and yet the "praise of men" has a prevailing influence over their minds, and they comply with what is sinful rather than be considered as singular or precise.

The condemnation of such men will be heavy in that day, when, notwithstanding all their pretensions of faith and righteousness, the Judge shall say, "I know you not whence you are; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." Luke xiii. 27.

ANCIENT ROMANS AT MEAT.

After preaching several days in the temple, and confirming his word by various miracles, which produced little other effect than that of drawing around him numerous spectators, and irritating to a greater pitch the malevolence of his enemies, our

CHRIST THE TEACHER.

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blessed LORD closed his public labors by celebrating the passover with his disciples. It became "him to fulfil all righteousness;" and as this solemn feast had been instituted not merely to perpetuate the remembrance of the deliverance of Israel from their Egyptian bondage, but also to prefigure the sacrifice of the paschal lamb who was to be offered up for the sins of the world; therefore did JESUS finish the rite himself before he completed what it represented on the cross. "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you," says he to his disciples as they sat at table with him, 'before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not eat any more thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of GOD."

On this occasion he showed them a striking example of humility by washing their feet, and afterwards "wiping them with the towel wherewith he was girded." This remarkable circumstance occurred while they were at supper, for it is said, "that when he had finished and was sat down again to the supper, he explained the reason of what he had done, in these words: "Ye call me Master and LORD; and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, being your LORD and master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet: for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his LORD; neither is he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." John xiii. 13—17.

After this affecting exhortation, which illustrated so powerfully the condescending action he had just performed, JESUS was troubled in spirit and said, "Verily, verily, one of you shall betray me." This declaration occasioned a deep concern among the disciples, and they began to look upon one another with astonishment. Each put the question with a degree of distressing anxiety, "LORD, is it I?" Even the traitor himself, Judas Iscariot, joined his brethren in the same inquiry, and received a token of assent. The demon of malice entered the heart of the apostate, as JESUS administered to him the sop dipped in the sacramental wine, which proved the seal of his condemnation. "That thou doest, do quickly," said his benevolent Master, with a penetrating look. The other disciples were ignorant of their LORD's meaning, and supposed that as Judas was the purse bearer, the intent of the words was, that he should provide what was necessary for the feast. When the traitor was departed, the blessed JESUS began to exult in the glorious prospect before him, though it was to be a dismal scene of pain and agony. "Now is the Son of man glorified," he exclaimed, "and GOD is glorified in him. If GOD be glorified in him, GOD shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." John xiii. 31—34. It was a strain of triumphant anticipation, that, notwithstanding all the malice of his adversaries, and the adversaries of man's salvation, the divine and human nature would each be glorified in this great conflict.

He then proceeded to comfort his disciples, and to exhort them to cultivate a spirit of mutual harmony, by a consideration drawn from his marvellous grace and kindness unto the sons of men. "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you; that ye also love one another." This is the reason why it is called a new commandment, because it is urged from a motive that was never duly felt, or could be understood before the time of our SAVIOUR. His love to us is indeed beyond all comprehension, for it brought him from the seat of glory to the state of wretchedness and suffering for our salvation: "if then he so loved us, how ought we to love one another?" 1 John iv. 11. As partakers of the same inestimable grace, as joint members of the same body, as heirs of the same great salvation, we are bound by the strongest obligations to "live in love." The whole human race were the objects of his love, and, therefore, we ought to regard all men as our brethren. But in an especial manner are we to be kind and compassionate, tender and forgiving, to those who with us are called Christians; however they may differ from us in opinions or customs. We have seen JESUS washing the feet of his disciples, and those of Judas the traitor among the rest. Let us profit by so amiable, so exalted an example, and instead of being proud, reserved, uncharitable, censorious, and vindictive, let us set this instance of our blessed SAVIOUR's condescension always before us, and learn from it not only to be kind and loving to our brethren, but forgiving and gentle even to our enemies.

Nothing certainly could be a fitter preparation for the institution of the holy eucharist than this striking example of humility. The passover was a particular rite confined to the circumstances of the Jewish nation only, though as a type it represented the

THE LAST SUPPER.

redemption of man by the sacrifice of the MESSIAH; but that rite was now to cease with all the other ordinances which prefigured CHRIST. Our LORD, having finished the passover, proceeded to institute another solemn feast in its room; and that it might make the deeper impression upon the minds of his disciples, he began with "washing their feet." Having thus shown with what temper and disposition of mind every follower of his must come to the feast, namely, in humility and charity, he "took bread," and having blessed it, he brake the same, and divided it among his disciples, saying, "Take, eat, this is my body which is given, or broken, for you." Luke xxii. 19. When he uttered these words, it is clear that his action expressed his meaning, or that, in saying, "This is my body which is given for you," he pointed with his finger to himself. But if he did not, the meaning is the same, and in that sense he must have been understood, for it is utterly impossible that the disciples could receive the bread as the very identical body of the person who addressed them. The language is figurative, and is very common in the New Testament. Thus our LORD calls himself "a door," and "a vine," because it is only through his merits that we can enter the kingdom of heaven; and that from him we derive spiritual strength and support, as the branches do from the vine. Nothing then can be more absurd than the doctrine of transubstantiation, which supposes that after the elements are consecrated, the "bread and the wine" become, in spite of our senses, the very body and blood of CHRIST.

When our LORD had distributed the bread, he took a cup of wine and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it. This cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins. But verily I say unto you, I will drink no more, henceforth, of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom;" meaning that he would make no more use of these typical shadows, as he was now about to perform what they represented. There is a striking difference between the address which our LORD made to his disciples when he gave them the cup, and that which he made use of when he distributed the bread. On giving the wine, he said: "Drink ye ALL of this;" meaning, beyond a doubt, that as the wine represented his blood poured out for the sins of the world, therefore all his followers were to partake of this communion in remembrance of the redemption which it represents. If his body was bruised for us, his blood was shed, that by faith we might be cleansed from all iniquity; consequently, it is our privilege and duty to partake of that which figures the one, as well as of that which represents the other. But the Roman church restricts the sacramental cup to the clergy, in direct opposition to the nature and design of the ordinance, as well as to the express words of our blessed SAVIOUR, "Drink ye ALL of this."

From these words, and from the very nature of the institution itself, which was to be a perpetual commemoration of the death of CHRIST, it is evident, that all who profess and call themselves Christians are under an indispensable obligation to partake of this holy ordinance.

By thus keeping our suffering, bleeding, and dying LORD "in remembrance," we gain a deeper knowledge of the deadly malignity of sin and of all its dreadful consequences. Here we behold what an immense price it cost the SAVIOUR to redeem us even with "his most precious blood." Here we see the purity of the divine law in its perfection exacting complete obedience to all its precepts. Here we learn the immutability and inflexibility of the justice of GOD, which could not be satisfied without the "shedding of blood," and that of the Son of GOD as of a lamb without spot and without blemish.

In considering these awful things, we must feel a sweet sense of gratitude to Him who hath thus wrought out our salvation at the expense of such excruciating agonies. We must feel an abhorrence of sin as the cause of all his bitter sufferings. We must have humbling views of ourselves, for delighting so much as we have done in that which oppressed his soul and lacerated his body. We must consequently, under the influence of such sentiments, desire to love GOD more, and to serve him better than we have hitherto done. On rising from this feast we shall "rejoice with trembling;" glad, inexpressibly glad, that we have communion with the Father through the merits of his Son, and by the influence of the Holy Ghost—but filled at the same time with a holy awe, with deep compunction of heart, and with more earnest breathings for an increase of divine love, and more holiness of heart and life.

In this ordinance there is a communion between heaven and earth. Angels attend

upon the devout worshippers, and share with them in their joy. CHRIST is present, and fills the hearts of his people with comfort while they are feasting upon him in faith. The eternal Father smiles upon the iteration of this acceptable sacrifice; and the Holy Spirit applies the blessings of pardon and peace to the soul of every humble and believing Christian. Well then may we, in this comprehensive view of the inestimable mercies displayed in the Supper of our LORD, adopt the animating invitation of the prophet: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Isaiah lv. 1, 2.

After supper our LORD exhorted his disciples to abide closely to each other, and in union with him as their spiritual head. He also comforted their hearts by assuring them, that though it was absolutely necessary for him to depart, yet that he would still visit and strengthen them in all difficulties by the power of his Spirit, which should rest upon them. After this he commended them in a solemn and affecting prayer to his heavenly Father, by which action he has taught us the duty of praying with and for each other. When the tender scene was ended, and JESUS and his disciples had sung a psalm, which most likely was one of David's, containing a prediction of the MESSIAH, they went towards the Mount of Olives, the usual place of our LORD's retirement. As they were going he told his disciples that they should all be offended and desert him that night. This, doubtless, affected all of them very sensibly, but Peter, more eager than the rest, exclaimed, "Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I!" The other disciples caught the spirit of their companion and repeated his declaration, but JESUS meekly reproved the over-confident apostle, by predicting that before the cock announced the dawn of day, he would deny his Master thrice.

When they came to the garden of Gethsemane, he took three of his disciples apart from the rest, and beginning to feel an inexpressible agitation of mind, he directed them to watch while he prayed at a little distance from them. Though the description which the Evangelists give of this awful scene is very concise, yet there is something in it that fills the mind with a chill of horror. His soul was oppressed with sorrow, and he was in a state of perplexity and amazement. Great indeed must have been that burden which lay upon his mind, to occasion this melting prayer: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Matt. xxvi. 39.

So great indeed was his agony, that the sweat which ran from him was, in the emphatic language of inspiration, "as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." What but an extremity of suffering could have produced such effects, in a person of that calmness and fortitude which our LORD always manifested in the most provoking trials? On the supposition of his being no more than man, this violent commotion of spirit, this dreadful conflict and agitation so strongly marked in the description, and so difficult to be conceived, could not be mentioned as a matter worthy of admiration, or as furnishing a brilliant example. It would seem, in that case, to argue a despondency of mind, a shrinking from danger, and a desire of life, contrary to his own doctrine. We must then, for the credit of our religion, and for the honor of its Author, as well as for the right understanding of the evangelical history, consider this agony in the garden as an inward conflict, the nature of which cannot be comprehended, but which was absolutely necessary to the perfecting of our salvation. It was a pressure upon the humanity of CHRIST, which, but for the divine nature united with it, could not have been supported. Hence the ancient Greek liturgies had this prayer in their litany, which very forcibly expresses the awful mystery of our SAVIOUR's agony: "By thy unknown sufferings, O CHRIST!"

In the height of this conflict "there appeared an angel unto him, strengthening him." This very circumstance, so happily introduced into the most mysterious scene of our SAVIOUR's life, sufficiently proves that the struggle he then endured was beyond all that imagination can conceive, and different from human sufferings, even those of the greatest magnitude. The appearance of an angel to "strengthen him," when he was assailed by no visible enemies, must be strange and unaccountable to those who regard JESUS CHRIST as a mere man, who came only to declare the way of life more perfectly, to open the doctrine of a future state, and to set an example of righteousness, fortitude, and resignation to the divine will. Considering him in this view only

and not as the bearer of our sins, and suffering the divine wrath in our stead, the whole of this affecting transaction must be perplexed and derogatory to our SAVIOUR'S character, as the most illustrious example of unshaken courage.

But Christians indeed, who believe him to be "both GOD and man," will have different sentiments when they contemplate him in the garden of Gethsemane. They will behold him there, not as a man endeavoring to avoid difficulties and suffering in the cause he had undertaken, but as taking the dreadful cup of the divine wrath on account of our sins, and in consequence of it exposed under the deepest gloom to the fierce attacks of the powers of darkness. They will behold him there, not as a poor suffering man shrinking from calamity, but as a warrior opposed singly to the host of hell. Their eyes are intent upon the champion, who is fighting for them with their most inveterate enemies; and they behold him in the dark valley contending and wrestling with "principalities and powers." In a reference to this memorable conflict the prophet Isaiah thus introduceth CHRIST as a mighty victor returning from the field of battle. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment." Isaiah lxiii. 1, 2, 3.

Peter, James, and John had been witnesses of his glorious transfiguration on Mount Tabor, that they might be the witnesses of his unparalleled sufferings in the garden of Gethsemane. What a fearful scene of agony did they here behold! There is the Son of GOD, prostrate on the ground, beseeching his Father, if it were possible, that the mysterious cup might pass from him; "and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground." Luke xxii. 44. All this is mysterious and inexplicable, if, with some, we reject the doctrine of atonement for sin by the sufferings and death of the REDEEMER; seeing there is the absence of all those causes which could have produced or justified that degree of mental agony here attributed to the REDEEMER. It was not the prospect of death which so fearfully agitated the SAVIOUR. Death can only be terrible to those who are conscious of guilt, and who are without hope. The Son of GOD was without sin, and he knew that his departure from this world would be to him an entrance into, and resumption of, "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was." "If," said he to his disciples, who sorrowed at the thought of his death, "ye loved me, ye would rejoice that I go unto my Father." It was not the near prospect of those indignities and cruel sufferings on which he was now about to enter which occasioned this distress. Our LORD knew from the beginning all that he should suffer: again and again had he proclaimed it to his disciples; he had hastened with joy to Jerusalem, when the time drew nigh, to meet all his sufferings: with a serene and triumphant spirit he goes forth from the garden to surrender himself into the hands of his enemies, and to be "led as a lamb to the slaughter." To suppose that the prospect of his sufferings occasioned this agony, would be to attribute to the Son of GOD less courage, and less of the spirit of endurance, than many martyrs have displayed who have gone to tortures and deaths, equally, and in some respects more, cruel and dreadful, with serene and triumphant souls.

The agony of CHRIST in Gethsemane was the agony of his soul, and must be traced to spiritual causes. CHRIST came to "make his soul an offering for sin." Isa. liii. 10. He endured the curse and wrath due to man's sin, to save us from both. He, as our substitute, put his soul into the soul's place of the millions whom he redeemed unto GOD. That satisfaction which the REDEEMER made for the guilt of sinners began in blood in the garden, and was completed by the shedding of his precious blood on the cross. The wrath of GOD due to man's sin now seized upon the suffering nature of the Son of GOD. The cup which was then presented to him was full of the anger of GOD for man's sin, and very bitter must it have been to his holy soul to receive such a cup from his Father who loved him. His holy soul now bore the weight of human guilt, for "the LORD laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isa. liii. 6. There is reason also to believe, that at the same time the SAVIOUR had to sustain a dreadful conflict with the powers of darkness. After the temptation in the wilderness, we read, "the devil departed from him for a season;" (Luke iv. 13;) but only like an enemy baffled and discomfited, afresh to muster his forces, and watch the opportunity of making a

more vigorous assault. This opportunity now presented itself: this was the hour of the power of darkness. It is probable that on this occasion the powers of darkness assailed the holy soul of the REDEEMER with the most horrid temptations and blasphemies, and exercised all their might and malice to turn him from his merciful design of making himself a sacrifice for sin, and thus prevent the redemption of the world. "The sorrows of death" now "compassed him about, and the pains of hell gat hold upon him." No wonder, then, that JESUS said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." We may judge of the magnitude and intensity of this mysterious agony of his soul, by the effect it produced on his corporeal frame—"his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

How deserving of our notice and imitation is the conduct of our blessed LORD in this time of sore agony of soul! He prays to his heavenly Father; thereby instructing us by his own example in all our afflictions to spread our sorrows before our Father who is in heaven. "Is any afflicted? let him pray." What resignation does CHRIST manifest in this prayer! "Abba, Father: all things are possible unto thee—take away this cup from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." In thus praying that the cup of sorrows, "if possible," might pass from him, our LORD exhibited the truth of his participation of our humanity. Human nature shrinks from suffering; and there is nothing sinful in this when suffering may be lawfully avoided. It was not possible, however, that the cup should pass from JESUS: it was necessary that he should drink it, even to the dregs, in order to save us: he therefore says, "Father, not my will, but thine be done." What a pattern here of perfect resignation to the divine will, and of the cheerful readiness of the SAVIOUR to endure unutterable agonies of soul, rather than leave the work of our redemption unaccomplished! While we admire his resignation to his Father's will, and his devotedness to the work of our salvation, we must not overlook his compassion to the infirmities of his disciples on this occasion. He had commanded them to "watch and pray," but he returns again and again, and finds them sleeping! But yet how mildly does he reprove, and how mercifully does he excuse, such unworthy conduct! "The spirit indeed," said CHRIST, "is willing, but the flesh is weak." Let us be concerned to imitate our LORD in this. We may suffer from the neglect of friends; let us not impute every neglect to a want of kindness; like our great Exemplar, instead of aggravating every instance of neglect into a crime, let us speak of it with mildness, and make the most charitable excuse for that which we are unable to defend.

It is impossible to close this astonishing record of the SAVIOUR'S agony in the garden without having our minds deeply impressed with the infinite evil of sin; seeing, in order to atone for man's sin, it was necessary that the Son of GOD should undergo such unparalleled sufferings. The more this is considered, the more shall we apprehend the strength of the REDEEMER'S love to us, and of the magnitude of our obligations to him in dying for us. What force do such considerations as these give to the apostolic exhortation, "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify GOD in your body, and in your spirit, which are GOD'S!" 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

When our SAVIOUR returned the third time to his disciples, and found them still slumbering, he said, "Sleep on now and take your rest; it is enough; the hour is come; behold now the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners! Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand." To understand these words, which, on a casual view, may imply a contradiction, we may suppose that our LORD, when he said, "Sleep on now and take your rest," meant that they might now rest safely, since in this conflict he had vanquished their enemies, and had gained that conquest by which the peace and happiness of his people are secured. But though the words may bear this sense, yet by considering them as a question, "Do ye sleep now and take your rest?" the difficulty is more easily removed, and the reading is at once natural and appropriate. At that very moment appeared Judas with a band of men to apprehend him. The traitor, who had betrayed his Master to the chief priests for a sum of money, gave the soldiers a sign by which they should distinguish JESUS from his disciples; "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, hold him fast, and lead him away safely." The apostate disciple, knowing well the spot where his Master usually retired, went before the soldiers, and on approaching him he assumed a gentle accent, and said, "Hail master! and kissed him." By going before the rest, and acting in this hypocritical manner it seems that Judas wished to impose upon his

Master, and upon his fellow disciples, and to appear as if he had no concern in this base transaction. But his treachery could not be concealed under the deep guise of dissimulation. JESUS meekly said to him, "Friend, wherefore art thou come? Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

The violence of an open enemy is far less criminal than the base and insidious conduct of men who endeavor to injure the persons whom they flatter and caress. In a religious sense this hypocrisy is infinitely more sinful than open impiety. Yet how many are there who, under the pretence of loving CHRIST and his gospel, "betray him into the hands of his enemies," or who injure his cause by a love of ungodly gain, by a sinful compliance with the customs of an evil world, and by yielding to the cavils of infidels and heretics, the fundamental doctrines upon which his church is established! How many, again, are there who "kiss the Son" with much apparent affection, who talk of his goodness, his love, and his grace, as though they were the best and most affectionate of his disciples, and yet all the while are serving his greatest adversaries, "the devil, the world, and the flesh!"

It has been the lot of our SAVIOUR, and still is so, to be "wounded in the house of his friends," or to receive the greatest injury and dishonor from those persons who are called by his name. Let all, then, who "bear the name of CHRIST" consider this well, that unless they are sincere in their profession, by "departing from iniquity," it will "be better for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for them."

The blessed JESUS having thus reproved Judas, who had the audacity to mingle with the rest of the disciples, went forward intrepidly to the soldiers, and said, "Whom seek ye? They answered, JESUS of Nazareth. JESUS saith unto them, I am he." On making this declaration, such a refulgence of glory and majesty burst from his countenance, as struck the whole band with terror, and they fell to the ground. When they had recovered themselves, he repeated his question; and receiving the same answer, he yielded himself up to them, though he had just given a sufficient proof that he had it in his power to destroy them all. But the appointed hour was come, and the absolute submission of our LORD to the lowest stage of degradation was indispensable in the great scheme of redemption, which was now drawing to a close.

The power of his enemies would have been excited in vain against him, if he had not voluntarily submitted himself into their hands, as "a lamb that is carried to the slaughter."

But though he was ready to encounter all the malice of persecutors in his own person, he was tender of the safety of his disciples.

In the midst of his own troubles, and in the view of the most dreadful sufferings, he has an affectionate concern for his little flock, and therefore addresses the soldiers in what might seem the language of supplication, did not their compliance show that they were compelled to obedience by his command: "If ye seek me," says he, "let these go away."

The disciples, however, were not disposed to imitate the patient submission of their Master, but requested leave to resist the soldiers. Without waiting for his answer, Peter, who was ever the most eager and zealous, "drew his sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear." JESUS, after healing the wounded man, reproved the forwardness of his disciple in terms which sufficiently prove the sinfulness of resisting the lawful magistrate: "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Matt. xxvi. 52–54; John xviii. 11.

On resigning himself into the hands of his enemies, JESUS expostulated with them for the treacherous manner in which they had proceeded against him. "Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you in the temple, and ye laid no hold of me, ye stretched forth no hands against me, but the Scripture must be fulfilled: this is your hour and the power of darkness." Matt. xxv. 55, 56; Luke xxii. 52, 53.

His disciples, who had probably been expecting to see the divine power of their Master exercised against his enemies, finding him now a prisoner, were panic struck and fled.

Peter, however, followed "afar off," and when he saw JESUS led to the palace of the

high priest, he entered with the crowd and sat down by the fire among the servants to watch the event. And now came on the examination of JESUS before the Sanhedrim; but though the vilest arts were made use of to procure evidences to substantiate some charge of a capital nature against him, yet none could be found, and when "false witnesses arose" their testimony was so contradictory, that the sanguinary judges themselves dared not admit it.

At length the high priest, who thirsted for the blood of the righteous, adjured JESUS in the name of the Most High, to declare whether he were the "CHRIST, the Son of the blessed." This form of adjuration could not, according to the Jewish law, be evaded. Our LORD, therefore, as soon as the question was put, answered directly: "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Mark xiv. 62.

When Caiaphas heard this declaration he "rent his clothes," as a token of the greatest abhorrence and detestation, exclaiming: "He hath spoken blasphemy! What farther need have we of witnesses? Behold now ye have heard his blasphemy; what think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of a crime deserving death." Nothing could be more iniquitous than this course of proceeding. According to their law, proclamation was to be made for all who had anything to allege in behalf of the prisoner to appear, but this was not done on the trial of JESUS; neither when he avowed himself to be the MESSIAH did they inquire into the proofs of his claim to that character. By declaring him a blasphemer without examination, the Jews are cut off from all hope of a MESSIAH; for what higher testimonies can be given of a divine mission than the working of miracles? It was the duty of the Sanhedrim to enter into a full and minute inquiry into the grounds upon which our LORD's pretension was built, and by the neglect of it they were not only guilty of shedding innocent blood, but of removing the very foundation of their religion.

Notwithstanding the numerous acts of love which he had performed for others, not a single person came forward out of gratitude to witness on his behalf. There were in the very council by whom he was tried some who believed in the truth of his mission, but the fear of man kept them silent. His own disciples had all forsaken him in the hour of persecution, agreeably to what he had himself foretold. Two of them indeed, Peter and John, followed him, but it was at a distance. Though they were apprehensive that their connexion with JESUS would bring them into danger, still there was a tender, sympathetic, dutiful concern for him in their minds. Faith was very weak, but affection was sincere and ardent. They "followed him afar off;" and Peter, whose courage was quick, ventured into the high priest's palace, where he sat with the servants by the fire, to see what would become of his Master. It was not long before he was recognised as one of the followers of JESUS; but when the question was put to him, he denied the fact with many imprecations.

The mock-trial of JESUS being finished, he was committed to the charge of the servants, by whom he was treated with the vilest indignities, being buffeted, blindfolded, and spit upon; all of which he endured with calmness. Thus was fulfilled the declaration of the prophet: "He hid not his face from shame and spitting." Isaiah l. 6.

Early in the morning the Sanhedrim again assembled, when the same scene was repeated, and the charge of blasphemy was confirmed.

But the Jews had no longer the power of putting "any one to death," and therefore JESUS was hurried away to Pontius Pilate the Roman governor, who finding that the accusation alleged against him related to matters peculiar to their religion, directed the chief priests to try the prisoner according to their law. This offer they refused, as by accepting it they could not accomplish their desired object, which was the death of JESUS. Rather therefore than miss their sanguinary aim, these perjured wretches, who could not, with all their craft and malice, gain any information against him of a criminal nature, accused him to Pilate as "a seditious person and an enemy to Cesar, because he had said that he was CHRIST, a king." Thus did they reject in one word all hopes of a MESSIAH, and chose a heathen emperor instead of the King of righteousness

When Pilate heard these words he took JESUS and examined him privately, but perceiving that the charge was the mere result of envy and revenge, he came out again to the Jews and declared that "he found no fault in the man."

Rage and disappointment now swelled their malevolent hearts beyond all bounds, and they vociferated that JESUS had been guilty of sedition "from Galilee even to Jerusalem." Luke xxiii. 5. As Galilee was under the jurisdiction of Herod, who had

murdered the Baptist, Pilate sent JESUS to him. Herod had long wished to see this wonderful person, whose miracles had excited so much notice in his country; and he was in hopes that "some notable miracle would now be performed by him in his presence." But when he could obtain no answer to the many questions which he put to JESUS, he treated him in a contemptuous manner, and sent him back again to Pilate, arrayed in a gaudy robe, as a mockery of his claim to the regal character.

From that day Herod and Pilate, who were before at variance, became friends. Thus the wicked, from worldly considerations, become bitter enemies; but when CHRIST and his church are to be opposed and persecuted, all private feuds are terminated, and they are linked in bonds of the closest amity.

When Pilate saw that Herod had inflicted no punishment on JESUS, he was the more confirmed in the conviction of his innocence, and therefore proposed to the Jewish priests to "chastise him and then release him." It was customary at the feast of the passover for the governor to release any prisoner whom the people should desire. As they were now clamorous that this privilege should be granted them, Pilate took the advantage of it by asking whether they would choose JESUS, or one Barabbas, who was a noted robber and murderer. By putting so vile a wretch in competition with JESUS, it is evident that Pilate thought the choice would fall upon the innocent person. But the Jews, at the instigation of their priests, preferred a criminal of the most atrocious cast to one whose whole life had been spent in doing good. Here we have a striking proof what little dependance is to be placed upon the disposition of the multitude. They who a few days before met JESUS with palms and olive-branches to welcome him into Jerusalem, now went to apprehend him with swords and staves; they who had hailed him with hosannas as the son of David, now cry vehemently, "Crucify him! crucify him!" and they who were eager to attend him as their king, now pursue him as a malefactor and thirst for his blood! Pilate resisted the clamors of the people for a long time, and repeatedly declared his intention of letting JESUS go; but there was a virtuous resolution wanting in him, and he had not the courage to oppose boldly the demand of the priests, though he was conscious that it was contrary to truth and justice.

At length they went so far as to threaten the governor, that if he refused to pass sentence of death upon JESUS, they would accuse him to the emperor as an abetter of treason. This declaration alarmed Pilate, who immediately placed himself on the judgment-seat; but still he felt a repugnance to adjudge a person to death of whose innocence he could not entertain the smallest doubt. Before he pronounced sentence, the reluctant governor caused JESUS, who had already been scourged, and whose wounds were still bleeding, to be presented to the view of the people, that by so moving a spectacle their hearts might relent. But they were steeled against all impressions of humanity, and when Pilate emphatically pointed their attention to the meek and injured sufferer, saying, "Behold your king!" they cried, "Away with him! crucify him!" John xix. 15.

The patience of Pilate was at last exhausted, but instead of driving the insolent and merciless rabble from his presence, he consented to their will, and delivered JESUS up to be crucified. Conscious, however, that he was shedding innocent blood, Pilate adopted a miserable device to free himself from the guilt of it. On pronouncing sentence, he took water, and washing his hands in the presence of the people, said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it." Matt. xxvii. 24.

The declaration was as false as the action was pitiful and superstitious: for with the power which was vested in him, and sensible as he was of the innocence of JESUS, it was his duty to resist the unrighteous demand of a misguided multitude, set on by their malevolent teachers. It is a shocking thing for a man to act against his conscience, and to be driven on in wickedness by the solicitations or threatenings of others. Pilate, in thus criminally consenting to the death of the innocent, entailed infamy upon his name, and in no long time afterwards was deposed from his government, at the instigation of the Jewish people, whom he had gratified at the expense of his conscience.

But the punishment of that nation was a still more striking display of the divine judgments. When Pilate endeavored to excuse himself from the guilt of shedding innocent blood, the people madly exclaimed, "His blood be on us and our children." The imprecation was most dreadful, but it was and is exactly accomplished in the destruction of Jerusalem, and may now be seen in the dispersed condition of the Jews

HILLS AND WALLS OF JERUSALEM.

ORIENTAL METHOD OF WASHING HANDS.

throughout the world. They are still a distinct people, "scattered and peeled among all nations," and though numerous and wealthy, yet despised everywhere, and without power.

Judgment being past, JESUS was delivered over to the Roman soldiers, who in derision of his claim to royalty, and at the same time out of contempt to the Jews, dressed him in a purple robe, put a crown of thorns upon his head, and a reed as a sceptre in his hand. Then they bowed the knee in mockery, saying, "Hail! king of the Jews!" But not content with insulting the innocent in distress, they treated him with the most barbarous cruelty, some of them smiting him with their hands, and spitting on him, while others took the reed from him and smote his head therewith, that the thorns might make a deeper impression, and occasion the most exquisite pain.

In this mangled and wretched condition was JESUS once more presented to the view of the people by the Roman governor, who said, "Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him!" Unmoved by this woful spectacle, or by the emphatic declaration of the governor, the chief priests repeated their demand that he should be crucified, and Pilate, borne down by their clamors, gave up the holy sufferer to endure the agonizing tortures of the cross.

Let us now contemplate with astonishment and with sorrowful concern the blessed JESUS, led away amidst the taunts and reproaches of an inhuman rabble to the place of execution. Were it a poor persecuted man who had fallen a victim to popular phrensy, or to the jealousy of a tyrannical government, we should feel emotions of tenderness at the injustice of his fate. But when we consider that this person's life has been spent in doing acts of kindness to his fellow-creatures, and in preaching the most important truths that ever were revealed for the instruction of mankind; when we add to this that his character is spotless, and his virtues the most exalted, we must be impressed with the deepest sympathy for his suffering condition, and with the greatest indignation at the conduct of his enemies. But what must be our wonder, our concern and gratitude, when in this oppressed, afflicted, lacerated sufferer we behold the eternal Son of GOD, the only begotten of his Father, full of grace and truth, who for "us men and for our salvation came down from heaven," passed a life of poverty and labor, and at last endured all "this contradiction of sinners," (Heb. xii. 3,) that by 'his stripes we might be healed" (Isa. liii. 5) of our mortal wound and live for ever. When we behold JESUS bearing his cross to Calvary, let us consider him as groaning

ROMAN SOLDIERS.

beneath the burden of our imputed guilt, which brought him to this low and suffering state. In following him with these thoughts we shall receive profit and consolation, while our hearts are melted down in tender compassion and grief. By viewing him thus as our sacrifice, "bearing our sins and carrying our sorrows," we shall approach the fatal spot where he is to be offered up with the greatest detestation of our iniquities, as the cause of this dismal tragedy, and with an earnest desire to love him more and to serve him better than we have hitherto done.

But behold he faints, he sinks beneath the ponderous load! The accumulation of injuries is too heavy for human nature to bear, and his mangled and enfeebled body can support the cross no longer. The soldiers, therefore, not out of compassion, but to prevent his expiring on the road, lay the burden upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, who was passing at the time, and compel him to bear it to the place of execution. We hear but little of Simon; the statements of the three evangelists are concurrent respecting him; each mentions him with great brevity, particularly St. Matthew, who merely styles him, "a man of Cyrene, Simon by name;" St. Luke is almost as brief· St. Mark is somewhat more particular in his sketch of him, calling him, "the father of Alexander and Rufus;" but one and all agree in the narration of what he did on that memorable day, when He who was the "eternal Son of the Father poured out his soul unto death."

If I might make my choice of these three statements, I should be inclined to select St. Luke's for my preference: "And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after JESUS." O, how I feel, when I read the words, "as they led him away!" Methinks I see Him, who was "holy, harmless, and undefiled," arraigned as a malefactor at the bar of Pilate, and then taken to the place of crucifixion, without resistance on his part, when he could have commanded legions of angels to descend to his relief; yet he quietly went forth to finish the work which had been given him to do, and then was fulfilled the saying of Esaias the prophet: "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Yes, they led him away, clad in the scarlet robe, crowned with the pointed thorns, and holding the reedy sceptre; and he turned not back, but on he went to the mountain of Calvary, to shed his precious blood for a world of rebels, who else would have perished without mercy. And now appears the man of Cyrene, and the cruel and relentless Jews seize him, and force him to bear the cross after JESUS. Then JESUS bore it first. St. John saith: "And he, bearing his cross, went forth into a place called the place of a scull." His exhausted frame then was wearied with the terrible exertion; and it would seem that Simon was compelled to ease him of the load, and bear it to the place where the Son of GOD was to be crucified. But having done this, his part was done; it was the "Man of Nazareth," not the "man of Cyrene," who was to be shortly stretched upon that fatal wood; it was "the Brightness of his Father's glory," that had veiled himself in a mantle of flesh, and was about to be made "an offering for sin;" it was not the blood of a mere mortal that was about to be shed—that could never placate Divine justice; but it was the blood of the "Only begotten of the LORD," "the everlasting Son of the Father;" that blood was sufficient to ransom the whole world, and win back the long lost favor of an offended GOD; "the blood of JESUS

CHRIST, his Son, cleanseth from all sin." Ought we not to retire from such a scene as the death of our REDEEMER full of contrition and sorrow for sin, and full of gratitude for the atonement made upon the accursed tree? What are the practical results accruing from the cursory glance at this little incident respecting Simon the Cyrenian?—Why, the question should suggest itself immediately to our minds, if we are really the disciples of CHRIST: Have I ever borne the cross after JESUS? Have I taken heed to his solemn declaration, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me?" We read that this man of Cyrene was "*compelled* to bear his cross;" do we murmur and rebel at any of the trials we are called to endure for the sake of the SAVIOUR of our immortal souls? Do we take up the cross as though we were forced to do so; and do we say, with one of old, "This is a grief, but I must bear it?" If this is the case with any of our readers, I cannot but entertain the fear that they are not the true followers of the Lamb, the real disciples of Him who voluntarily and cheerfully laid down his life for their eternal salvation. Let, then, the writer plainly say, "He that taketh not up his cross, cannot be his disciple." Let these awful words continually sound in their ears, and impress their hearts; and in place of reluctantly bearing the cross, for the sake of Him who died thereon in unparalleled anguish, let them adopt the language of Paul the aged, and say, GOD forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST." Happy they who, like Simon the Cyrenian, are privileged to bear the cross after JESUS, because when the season of suffering is finished, they shall drop the heavy load at the end of their journey, and entering into the many mansions prepared for them by their LORD and Master, shall have a sparkling crown of fadeless glory placed upon their immortal brows, which crown they shall cast at the feet of the REDEEMER.

As the mournful procession advanced to Calvary, "there followed," says the Evangelist, "a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him." These lamentations evidenced the anguish of their hearts, and the depth of their affection for their divine Master—an affection further testified when, after the crucifixion, according to the statement of the Evangelist, "all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things that were done, smote their breasts and returned." The tears shed by the daughters of Jerusalem were not unnoticed by JESUS. He knew their source was sympathy for his sufferings; but he was unwilling that they should weep for him. How different would have been the conduct of an impostor—of any one of the false Christs who appeared at different periods! He would rather have courted commiseration, magnified his sufferings, fanned the flame of pity kindled in their bosoms, and sought to obtain a rescue. JESUS, however, sought neither human tears nor human rescue. Even in this dark and trying hour, his eye was steadily fixed on "the joy that was set before him," and for which he was contented to endure the cross and to despise the shame. Had he sought pity, the angelic host would have wept over his agony. Had he desired a rescue, myriads of that host would have scattered his insulting foes. The crown of thorns was now upon his brow, but it would soon be exchanged for the diadem of glory. The robe of mockery now covered him, but it would give place to the vesture on which a name is written: "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." The malignant shout of the multitude assailed his ears, but it would soon give place to the deep-toned hosannas of the ransomed. The sun was now to be shrouded in darkness, but this would be succeeded by the brightness of an eternal day. His precious blood was to be poured forth, but in that blood countless multitudes should wash their robes and make them white.

JESUS did not blame the attendant women for giving vent to the emotions of their hearts. He did not turn with disdain from the tear of sympathy. Christianity does not forbid its disciples to weep with those that weep. It does not represent the burst of anguish as rebellion against the providence of GOD. JESUS had himself wept over the city, the inhabitants of which would not receive him as their LORD. He had wept at the grave of Lazarus; and thus testified the depth of his affection, and his participation in the feelings of humanity. He desired the women to weep, not for him, but for themselves and their children. He well knew the miseries that were awaiting them. He could foresee the destruction of their city, the massacre of its inhabitants, the long and weary wanderings of its scattered tribes. His eye could trace the dark stream of their destiny until the present hour, nay, until the period shall arrive when the LORD shall build up Zion, and appear in his glory; when Judah shall once more rejoice, and Israel shall be glad. Little, indeed, were the multitudes aware of the

heinousness of the act they were committing. Little did they know that tney were crucifying that MESSIAH whose advent had for ages been the theme of prophecy, and the subject of the most rapturous anticipation. Little were they aware how speedily their imprecation would be answered—"His blood be upon us and our children!" Unhappy descendants of the Father of the faithful, whose prejudice and pride would not suffer them to sit as disciples at the feet of the Son of the carpenter, whose eyes were closed to the brightest evidence of his divinity, whose ears were shut to his gracious invitations, whose hearts were hardened against the reception of the truth.

Daughters of Jerusalem, *weep for yourselves*, for the woes coming upon you, for the desolation of your land, the ruin of your strongholds, the destruction of your people. And may not the same exhortation be addressed to the sinner now? Weep not for JESUS, but weep for thyself, at the reflection of the wretchedness of thy present condition, at the anticipation of the wo that is reserved for thee hereafter. Thy state is one of alienation and estrangement from GOD. The path thou art treading is the broad road of carnal gratification, of sensual indulgence, of heedlessness to the warning voice of the ALMIGHTY, of blindness to the fact that its end is destruction of soul and body for ever. Thy future prospects are indeed most melancholy; thy sins unpardoned; thy soul unsanctified; thy heart unchanged; thy affections centred in the perishing objects of time—living without GOD, thy death must be without hope, and the blackness of darkness must be thy portion for ever. Weep, then, for thyself, for the dishonor cast by thee on that SAVIOUR who suffered in agony upon Calvary, for the ingratitude thou testifiest to that glorious and gracious Being by whom so many blessings have been showered upon thee; and whose love towards the children of men was chiefly commended in this, in that while they were yet sinners CHRIST died for them. May the tears of penitence be abundantly shed by thee. May a sense of thy guilt and danger arouse thee from thy spiritual slumber ere yet it be too late. Mayest thou lay hold of the offer of pardoning mercy set forth in the Gospel. May thine eye be directed in faith and humiliation to Him whom thou hast pierced; who died the just for the unjust; in whose blood a fountain has been opened for sin and uncleanness; in which the most polluted are invited to wash, that they may become meet for the inheritance of GOD's eternal kingdom.

Daughters of Jerusalem, weep for your children. Sympathy for the woes of others will be a prominent feature in the character of a true believer. The love of GOD, in deed, cannot dwell in that man who shutteth up his bowels of compassion towards a suffering fellow-creature. The bitter root of selfishness eradicated from his bosom, and his heart expanded to take an interest in all that concerns his brother-man, he cannot view with indifference the fearful prevalence of evil, the recklessness usually testified on matters of eternal moment. His language will be that of the prophet: "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" Jer. ix. 1. His feeling will be that of the apostle, when he told his Philippian converts, weeping, that many walked who were "enemies of the cross of CHRIST, whose end is destruction." Phil. iii. 18. If the temporal necessities of a brother have a strong claim on our beneficence for relief, how much more his spiritual! If to visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction be an evidence of a pure and undefiled religion, it cannot be less so to bring the soul into close communion with Him who is a Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widows—GOD in his holy habitation. If the remedy is quickly applied for the healing of the maladies of the body, surely the hurts of the soul should not be disregarded. If it is an imperative duty to further a fellow-creature's temporal happiness, how much more imperative is it to seek to lead him to glory! Assuredly if there is no anxiety on this subject in our minds, it is a melancholy proof that we are strangers ourselves to the true character of the Gospel. If the tear of sorrow has never flowed at the reflection of the misery, in time and eternity, of those who know not GOD, and obey not the Gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, it is an evidence that the sigh of contrition has never escaped our own lips; and that our own situation is such as to cause the angels of GOD to weep over us.

Blessed are they who, like the sorrowing daughters of Jerusalem, are willing to follow CHRIST fully, through evil as well as good report; who are not ashamed to confess him before men, and whom he will confess when he cometh in the fulness of his glory, seated on the clouds of heaven. Their journey through the wilderness of a fallen world may be perilous and disastrous; still, though it be to them as the valley

of weeping, they will find various pools of refreshment in their way. Aided by an almighty Protector, they will go on from strength to strength unwearied; and when at last they appear before the God of gods in Zion, their warfare accomplished, and their iniquity pardoned, and the days of their journey ended, their dwelling-place shall be that New Jerusalem, where there is neither sorrow nor crying; where the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

When the procession arrived at the appointed place, a potion consisting of "vinegar and gall" was given to Jesus, but when he had tasted thereof he would not drink. It was customary on these occasions to give the sufferer a mixture of wine and myrrh, to stupify the senses and hasten death. But out of cruelty our Lord's persecutors omitted this, and gave him a nauseous draught, thus fulfilling what was said by David: "They also gave me gall for my meat, and vinegar to drink." Psalm lxix. 21. On his refusing this, it is supposed that some of his friends offered him the customary potion, but this also he rejected, being determined to endure all the pains that could be inflicted on him to the very uttermost.

The body of Jesus being laid upon the accursed tree, and his arms stretched out on the transverse beam to such an extent as to produce the most excruciating pain, sharp irons were driven into the wood through the palms of his hands, and likewise through the most tender part of his feet. A label was then placed over his head, written by Pilate, bearing this inscription in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." Thus was the Roman governor the means of proclaiming the regal dignity of our Lord to all the world. This, however, gave great offence to the chief priests, who requested that it might be altered: but Pilate, out of resentment at having been compelled by them to shed the blood of the innocent contrary to his inclination, refused to gratify their desire.

The sacrifice, being thus laid as it were upon the altar, was raised up between heaven and earth, a spectacle to angels and to men.

There hangs the Lamb of God, suffering what no human imagination can possibly conceive. The blood flows in streams from his wounded temples, from his hands and his feet, while every nerve is agitated with pain, and every sense is tortured with agony. The whole weight of his body being suspended from the nails which fasten his hands to the cross, renders the sense of feeling most exquisite in every part, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot.

In such a woful state we should expect that the people would have hung down their heads in sorrow, and been grieved for their conduct, but instead of this they had the cruelty to mock and deride the sufferer in his last agonies, and to vent the bitterest reproaches upon him for pretending to be the Messiah. Thus literally were accomplished the ancient prophecies, particularly that of David: "All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." Psalm xxii. 7, 8.

It is natural that fellow-sufferers should feel a degree of sympathetic concern for each other; but so generally was our Lord "despised and rejected of men," (Isa. liii. 3,) that even one of the thieves crucified with him treated him with insolence and derision. We cannot but wonder that such obduracy of heart should be found in one who was writhing in the most excruciating tortures. But we hasten from this melancholy spectacle, to behold a more pleasing scene. The other malefactor reproved his companion for the impiety of his conduct, and after acknowledging the justice of their punishment, and the innocence of Jesus, he turned to him and said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Luke xxiii. 42.

That he should confess the divinity of Christ, and pray to him as his God and king, when he beheld him mocked, derided, bleeding, and dying by his side, is truly astonishing, and can be attributed only to the powerful grace of God. The instance, however, is encouraging to sinners, as it proves that repentance, even at the last hour, will be accepted, and that salvation is extended to the vilest of mankind, who seek for it in penitence and faith. The prayer of the dying thief was thus graciously answered by him to whom it was addressed: "Verily I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Who is this that receives homage while suspended on the ignominious tree, covered with wounds, and bathed in his own blood? Who is this that takes upon him to open the gates of heaven, and to pronounce pardon and peace, while his

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own hands are transfixed with rugged irons to the cross, and his whole body is racked with pain and agony? Who indeed can it be, but the LORD of glory himself, the Deity incarnate, who, though he was in the form of GOD, "thought it not robbery to be equal with GOD: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.

Thus the salvation of this poor wretched outcast was the first fruits of our SAVIOUR's passion, the first purchase of his death. He caught the prey from the very jaws of the enemy; and while struggling himself with the king of terrors, he snatched this miserable object who cried to him for mercy, and gave him a place in his kingdom. What a mortification is this to pride and self-righteousness! Thousands of ostentatious Pharisees are permitted to remain in their sins and infidelity, while one, whose life has been a complete scene of iniquity, is healed by the blood of CHRIST, and has the distinguished privilege of entering with him into paradise.

Consider this, ye who are vain of your moral worthiness, and who despise others. Let this incident humble you in your own estimation, and convince you of this important truth, which it was evidently designed to teach, that the merits of CHRIST are only efficacious to those who are of a "broken and contrite heart;" who, being sensible that they are sinners, seek for pardon only through the merits and mediation of a crucified SAVIOUR.

At the foot of the cross stood some of those pious women who had accompanied JESUS from Jerusalem, and among the rest was his mother, supported by John the Evangelist, to whom, as a dying bequest, our LORD commended the care and protection of her in the most affectionate terms. Soon after this a supernatural darkness overspread the earth, which lasted from twelve o'clock at noon till three. So remarkable was it, that Dionysius the Areopagite, who was then in Egypt, said to his friend Apollophanes, "Either the Author of nature suffers, or he is sympathizing with some one who does." This circumstance was afterwards the means of bringing the same philosopher over to Christianity.

And well might the sun suffer obscuration, when the Sun of righteousness was experiencing an eclipse of the most awful nature, even a degree of mental agony which cannot be expressed, but which forced from his lips this plaintive cry—"My GOD, my GOD, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matt. xxvii. 46. At that moment, doubtless, the wrath of the ALMIGHTY against sin was peculiarly displayed; and He who bore the immense weight of our guilt was deprived of those consolations and joys which proceed from communion with the Father. The outward darkness was but a faint image of that dreadful horror which filled the soul of our SAVIOUR while his Father's face was withdrawn from him, and the fury of divine anger raged vehemently against him. To describe or conceive the agony, which in that dismal scene of wo he endured, is utterly impossible; but it is proper that our minds should often be led to the contemplation of the affecting scene, that we may have an abiding sense of gratitude to him who hath borne so much for us. But the period of suffering hastens to a close. "JESUS, knowing that all things were now accomplished, saith, I thirst. On hearing this, one of the soldiers took a sponge, dipped it in vinegar, and put it to his mouth; and when JESUS had tasted of the vinegar, he cried, It is finished;" that is, the whole work of redemption, or what he was to do for the purpose of reconciling sinners to GOD, was completed. "And when he had cried again with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost." Luke xxiii. 46.

The manner in which our LORD expired sufficiently proves what he himself had declared, that he had "power to lay down his life, and power to take it again," for he "cried with an exceeding loud voice," which in that kind of death was never known, as the powers of nature must necessarily be exhausted long before the last breath departed. But JESUS possessed the full powers of his voice in the very moment of dissolution; and when he exclaimed "It is finished!" it was the cry of a triumphant conqueror exulting over his prostrate foe.

All nature was agitated at this awful moment, and many prodigies distinguished the great event. The heavens were covered with darkness, and the sun seemed to be blotted from the firmament. The earth shook from her foundations, the rocks were

rent in pieces, the graves were opened, and the bodies of some holy persons arose and appeared unto many.

The veil which parted the holy of holies from the rest of the temple was rent in twain, to signify the abrogation of the ceremonial law, and that the partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles was now, by the death of CHRIST, wholly to be removed.

These astonishing miracles filled the minds of many persons with terror, who came out of Jerusalem merely to gratify a wanton curiosity, or to indulge their enmity to JESUS by witnessing his sufferings. They who had before mocked and reproached him as an impostor, were now convinced of his innocence, and returned to the city hanging down their heads in sorrow, and smiting their breasts in remorse.

ROMAN CONSUL, GENERAL AND MILITARY OFFICERS.

The very commander of the Roman soldiers, who attended the execution, could not but acknowledge that "this was the Son of GOD." Thus did JESUS, in his last moments, triumph over his enemies, and even on the ignominious tree gather trophies of glory, by bringing both Jew and Gentile to confess his righteousness and divinity.

But the bigoted Pharisees and chief priests still continued obstinate and unmoved amidst this conflux of miracles, and what could convince a heathen idolater, and a proud Roman, had no effect upon their minds.

Yet so superstitious were these very persons, that though they made no scruple of imbruing their hands in the blood of the innocent, they were afraid that the land would be defiled, if the bodies of those who had been crucified continued hanging on the Sabbath-day. Therefore, they besought Pilate that their legs might be broken to hasten their death, and that they might be taken away. This was granted; and the legs of the two malefactors were broken by the soldiers; but as JESUS was already dead, they brake not his legs; one of them, however, out of wanton barbarity, pierced his side with a spear, and straightway there flowed thence blood and water; thus were these predictions fully accomplished, "a bone of him shall not be broken," (Psa. xxxiv. 20,) and "they shall look on him whom they have pierced." Zech. xii. 10.

It was customary to cast out the bodies of those who had suffered crucifixion, which was the most ignominious of all punishments, without interment. But though our LORD, according to ancient prophecy, was to be numbered with transgressors "of the vilest cast," that his humiliation might be as low as possible, yet it was also predicted that he should "make his grave with the rich in his death." Isa. liii. 9–12. This also was literally fulfilled, for Joseph of Arimathea, a man of considerable wealth and influence,

went to Pilate and begged the body of JESUS, which being granted him, he took and embalmed it, and laid it in a new sepulchre hewn out of a rock. The circumstances of our LORD's death and burial are very circumstantially related by all the Evangelists, that the proof of his resurrection might appear incontestable. Even the malignity of the Jews concurred in establishing the truth of this glorious article of our faith, and to prove the fact beyond all doubt. Remembering that JESUS had declared that he would rise again in three days, the chief priests and Pharisees were determined, out of malice, to give the death-blow to Christianity, by proving the fallacy of his prediction. It was impossible, they thought, that he whose death was now certain, should revive again; but lest his followers might secrete his body and thereby pretend that he was risen, they went to the governor and requested him to appoint a guard of soldiers to watch the sepulchre. This was done, and by them was the resurrection of JESUS witnessed.

On the morning of the first day of the week, the stone which closed the mouth of the sepulchre was removed by a supernatural power, and a great earthquake announced the return of the mighty Conqueror from his triumph over death and the grave; and the angelical host, though they had borne no part in the arduous conflict, attended to swell the glory of the scene and to wait upon their risen Sovereign. The soldiers, when they beheld these wonders, hastened in terror to their employers, and informed them of all the particulars; but, in the true spirit of infidelity, the Sanhedrim, after having persecuted JESUS to death, were determined not to acknowledge him, though they had the certain proof of his having risen from the dead. They meanly gave large bribes to the soldiers to declare that while they slept his disciples had taken away the body of JESUS. A worse plea could hardly be found, for if the soldiers were asleep, how could they affirm that his disciples had committed this fact; and besides, how was it possible for a few unarmed timorous men to succeed in so bold an enterprise, which must have exposed them to the hazard of their lives, and when accomplished could be productive of no advantage?

But the evidence of this mighty event rested not upon one or two circumstances. It was established the same morning by the declaration of angels to some pious women, who, faithful in their attachment, came at the dawn of day to the sepulchre of their LORD. They communicated the glad tidings to the disciples, who were themselves soon convinced of the joyful truth by his presence among them. Thomas, however, one of the twelve, was not with them when JESUS appeared, and the report of his brethren seemed so incredible, that he resolved not to believe, unless he should see his wounds, and be permitted to put his hand into his side. The doubts of the incredulous apostle were quickly removed, for JESUS came again amongst the disciples, and graciously condescended to expose his wounded hands and side to the fingers of Thomas, whose heart overflowed with the mingled effusions of sorrow, joy, and gratitude, and he cried out, "My LORD and my GOD!" John xx. 28.

On many occasions, and to different persons, did JESUS manifest himself after his resurrection, though not to the priests or to the body of the Jewish nation, whose obduracy rendered them unworthy of such a favor. But there were sufficient witnesses of the fact, for he not only held the most familiar communications with his apostles, but with others of his followers, and "was seen of above five hundred brethren at once," the greatest number of whom lived many years afterwards, and were consequently able to attest a circumstance of which they were the eye-witnesses. On these occasions he gave particular instructions to his disciples with respect to their important commission, directing them to wait at Jerusalem till they should be "endued with power from on high," or receive the influence of the Holy Ghost, after which they should go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all nations, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. xxviii. 19.

Having finished the work his Father gave him to do, JESUS conducted his disciples to the Mount of Olives, (or Mount of Ascension,) whence, after giving them his solemn benediction, "he was parted from them and carried up into heaven." His retinue consisted of a glorious train of angels, some of whom tarried behind to comfort his astonished, weeping, adoring disciples, with the assurance that as they had "seen him go into heaven, so in like manner should they behold him come down from heaven," when he shall appear in majesty, to "judge both the quick and dead."

The royal prophet has a sublime description of this glorious and triumphant entrance of our blessed REDEEMER, in the twenty-fourth Psalm. The throne of glory, like the

INTERIOR OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

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holy of holies in the temple, is represented as of such transcendent purity, that nothing imperfect can venture to approach it. How then can human nature draw near unto this "hill of the LORD, or stand in his holy place?" Acts i. 11. The question is of infinite concern to us, who appear to be cut off by it, in consequence of our defiled state by sin, from the possibility of an admission into the presence of GOD. But the prophet hastens at once to describe the character of the MESSIAH, who, as our Surety and Representative, takes possession of the seat of glory for us. "He shall ascend and stand there," says he, "who hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully, (or violated the covenant into which he entered for our redemption.) He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness "for his people from the GOD of his salvation."

The psalmist then describes this exalted personage, this glorious Mediator, as coming up from the regions of corruption, and darkness, and death. Numerous angels precede his approach, and boldly on his behalf demand entrance into the realms of light. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates," they cry, "and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in." Unused to such sounds from the quarter of desolation, the guardian spirits within cautiously inquire: "Who is this King of Glory?" Their brethren eagerly reply, "The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle," all victorious. It is JESUS, the Captain of salvation, who hath contended with the powers of darkness, who hath vanquished the foes of Heaven, rescued the captives who were bound in chains, disarmed death of its sting, robbed the grave of its prey, and triumphed completely over all the hosts of hell. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates," again they exclaim, "and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in."

A degree of uncertainty still remains, and the watchful keepers of paradise require yet a farther account of him who sends his heralds with such a high demand. "Who is this King of Glory?" The celestial harbingers thus emphatically describe him: "The LORD of Hosts. He is the King of Glory." As much as if they had said, "He who commandeth the armies in heaven, and who controlleth the inhabitants of the earth; he who possesseth all power, and doeth whatsoever he will; who holdeth the keys of hell and of death;" but who hath stooped to the lowest state of misery, that he may become the head of a redeemed people, and to bring hosts of happy souls to heaven, by virtue of his meritorious death and passion, "he is the King of Glory." Psa. xxiv. 3–10.

Here the inquiry closes; all doubt is ended; no farther objection can be offered: the impenetrable gates are lifted up; the REDEEMER enters with his glorious retinue, and takes his seat at the right hand of the throne of GOD.

Nor were the gates closed again; since it was for this express purpose that they were thrown open, "that the righteous nations might," by virtue of their alliance with JESUS, "enter in."

An entrance into the realms of immortality is now become accessible through the sufferings, resurrection, and ascension of our blessed REDEEMER.* He hath ascended

* THE ATONEMENT.—The doctrine of the atonement is not a mere speculative doctrine, one which we may embrace or not, as we please, and the rejection of which is to be classed among involuntary errors: if it be true, and if we believe it to be true, (for GOD has made the application of it to ourselves to depend upon our own faith,) then we shall rise again to everlasting life; but if there be no such doctrine, then we have no promise, and we can have no certain hope that we shall rise again at all. Let a man reject the Scriptures altogether, let him deny that in Adam all die, and then he may not see the necessity or the fitness of CHRIST'S atonement. But will he be a gainer by this miserable unbelief? He may not believe that death is the lot of all men in consequence of one man's sin, but, from some cause or other, knows that he himself shall die; and how does he know, without the light of Christianity, that from that death he shall ever rise again? Will abstract reasoning lead him to this conclusion? Let him look to the sages of Greece and Rome, and he will see them, as wise perhaps, or wiser than himself, lost in the ocean of perplexity, or wrecked on the shoals of atheism. Does he think that his own virtues will raise his body from the grave; and that these are sufficient to ensure him the happiness of heaven? This is, in fact, the creed of those unhappy persons who reject the atonement of CHRIST. They may not like to speak of the sufficiency of human merit, or of claiming heaven as a right; but if they do not look for redemption from sin and its punishment through the righteousness and the death of CHRIST, they must trust to themselves; they must think, that what they have done well will atone for what they have done amiss; and let every one look into his own heart, and see whether this is a belief which will open to him the happiness of heaven. There may be difficulties in the doctrine of the atonement; the very notion of it is fraught with mystery; but GOD has revealed

THE MOUNT OF THE ASCENSION. *Luke* xxiv. 50, 51; *Acts* i. 9, 12.

up on high for us, and "he ever liveth to make intercession in our behalf," as our advocate with the Father, full of grace and truth. He invites us by his ministers and in his holy gospel, to share the heavenly blessings which he hath purchased for us. He calls and courts us by his grace to accept of him as our "Prophet, Priest, and King." In the first capacity, he is ready to instruct us in all things necessary to our salvation, to direct us in every exigency and difficulty of life, to comfort us in all our troubles, and to refresh us with the most delightful promises in our progress towards heaven As our *Priest*, he hath shed not "the blood of bulls and of goats," but his own, as that of a lamb without blemish, that our sins may be blotted out thereby, and that there may be no more any handwriting of remembrance against us on account of our transgressions. But that we may partake of the benefits of this sacrifice, that we may be cleansed by his blood, enter with him into the holy place not made with hands, and be made the objects of his intercession, we must receive him as our GOD and King. As the fallen descendants of a fallen progenitor, we are all sinners from the womb, and rebels against the majesty of Heaven. The prince of this world, as the devil is properly named, hath received from us too ready a compliance with his desires, and we have always been more disposed to hearken to his temptations and to be insnared by his devices, than to regard the commandments or denunciations of the ALMIGHTY. Now, as JESUS came to deliver us from this state of bondage and delusion, he expects that we should submit our hearts and affections entirely to the influence of his grace, and be led and directed wholly by his Spirit. Nor does he exact any hard service at our hands, or propose any unreasonable terms for our obedience. For can any precepts be plainer to the understanding, more easy to be followed, or better adapted to promote even our temporal peace and happiness, than those which JESUS CHRIST has left on record in his blessed gospel? Then what gracious assurances does our merciful SAVIOUR give us of his strengthening and directing grace, to assist us in all that holy obedience which he requires from us; and what rich consolations does he pour into the hearts of his fainting, desponding, and sorrowful disciples to cheer them in their pilgrimage! In the services of his sanctuary, in the preaching of his word, and at the family altar, he holds communion with his faithful servants now, and will do so to the end of the world. Thus, in his service, they experience much sweetness, and though a licentious, wicked, and unbelieving generation may despise the cross as foolishness, and consider religion as a burden too heavy for a liberal mind to bear; yet they who have felt the value of their souls, who have duly considered the heinous and provoking nature of sin, and who look upon eternity as a very awful state, will prize the religion of JESUS as "the pearl of great price," for which the sacrifice of a world would be a trifle beneath notice. They will gladly abandon all things else, to have an interest in the redemption which hath been wrought out by JESUS CHRIST. The pleasures, and honors, and riches of the world are no longer desirable in their estimation, for these things are lighter than vanity, are dissipated by a breath of wind, and, in a few days, will be lost for ever; but the "unsearchable riches of CHRIST," the blessings which he hath purchased, and which he is ready to bestow on all who apply for them with penitent and submissive hearts, will "endure for ever."

That which poisons all worldly enjoyments, namely, their uncertainty, and the fear of being soon separated from them by death, cannot affect him who hath placed his affection upon the REDEEMER. He finds here an unchangeable object of love, a source of perpetual joy, and the sure prospect of immortal happiness. When all temporal glory is ended, and when nothing but a boundless eternity appears in view, the soul that has chosen JESUS CHRIST for its portion and chief good, shall fearlessly enter the

enough to make faith an anchor of our souls, both sure and steadfast. That CHRIST, having the divine nature added to the human, should be perfectly free from sin, is not difficult to be believed—that, having taken our human nature, he should be subject to death, is also a point which we might expect—that his divine nature should enable him to rise again from the dead, is agreeable to our notions of divinity: so that in these three propositions, viewed separately and distinctly, human reason would find nothing which it might not readily adopt. That GOD should accept the death of CHRIST as an atonement for the death of all men is undoubtedly an article of faith; it is one which, if GOD had not revealed it, we could never have discovered; the pride of reason may reject it, and the coldness of philosophy may reduce it to a name; but we have not so learned CHRIST; we know that it is appointed unto all men once to die, and after death the judgment; and who is there amongst us that looks into his own heart, that sees there a consciousness of sins for which he will hereafter be judged, that hears the comfortable assurance that these sins may be washed away in the blood of CHRIST—who will not say with a thankful, though a fearful heart 'LORD I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

mighty expanse, and be borne away in triumph and joy to the bosom of its SAVIOUR and GOD.

THE tendency of this work has been to trace the gradual progress of the work of redemption till it was completed in the humiliation and ascension of JESUS CHRIST. We have endeavored to make this point clear, as being of the greatest importance, namely, that there has been from the beginning but ONE FAITH, by which men have been enabled to live righteously and to die happily. With this view it has been proved, that all the saints of old either represented the REDEEMER as types, described him as prophets, or believed in him for salvation.

We have attended minutely to this "cloud of witnesses," and been edified, we trust, by the united testimony which they have borne to this great object of our faith.

We saw the moral world plunged into an awful state of darkness, error, and idolatry, through the artifices of the old serpent; but immediately afterwards our hearts were comforted by the promise given to our fallen progenitors, that this sad breach between heaven and earth should be repaired, that the power of the usurper should be destroyed, and that the "seed of the woman" should bring in everlasting salvation.

We have seen righteous Abel offering up an acceptable sacrifice in the strength of this faith, becoming at last a martyr for it, and exhibiting in his life and death a direct type of the MESSIAH.

In the lives of the patriarchs this great object of expectation appeared to be the principle which animated them in all their trials, and guided them in their earthly pilgrimage. The same thing was represented in the deliverance of the Israelites from the house of bondage, in the formation of their civil and ecclesiastical polity, in their different stages in the wilderness, and in their final establishment in Canaan. It became a more distinct object in succeeding times, and was plainly marked and described by David and the prophets.

The harbinger of the day of grace at last ascended above the horizon, and announced the speedy appearance of that glorious orb, before whom all the clouds and shadows of the law were to be dispersed, by whom every doubt was to be resolved, and "life and immortality be brought to light."

We then beheld the Sun of righteousness bursting forth upon a long-benighted world; we have traced his glorious progress; we have witnessed his mighty acts; we attended to his salutary discourses; and we have seen him pouring out his blood upon the altar, between heaven and earth, as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. With weeping eyes we followed the pious mourners who bore him to the sepulchre in the garden, but soon were our hearts enraptured on beholding his triumphant resurrection from the tomb; with the most elevated joy have we attended to his victory over death and the grave; and with the most lively gratitude and hope we witnessed his glorious ascension into heaven. By the eye of faith have we followed the mighty conqueror through the regions of immortality, till we beheld him seated as our MEDIATOR at the right hand of the throne of GOD, from whence he cheers us with these transporting words: "Where I am, there shall my servants be."

After contemplating this transcendently glorious object, what other examples can be considered as worthy of our attention? When he appears, angels and archangels, apostles and evangelists, martyrs and confessors, all shrink away to nothing. However deserving of admiration, as the faithful messengers of the divine will, zealous in their obedience, steadfast in their faith, and wholly exemplary in their conduct, still while He is in view, from whom all their grace is derived, and in whose presence all their glory vanishes, it would be derogating from his exalted dignity to distinguish them by any particular notice. Before the ascension of the Sun of righteousness, every star was an object calculated to cheer and direct us; but when he arises all our attention is fixed upon him, and every lesser luminary disappears.

The sweet and benevolent disposition of St. John the Evangelist, the intrepidity and honesty of St. Peter, the zeal and unremitted perseverance of St. Paul, are indeed all worthy of commendation, and are examples of great concern; but while the Master is present, the servants cannot expect that attention which is due to him. While we are "looking upon JESUS" his attendants are forgotten. Infinite excellences appear in his person and character which demand our constant observation; and, as far as human infirmity can follow such an example, our closest imitation. There is not a virtue that

GRECIAN FOOT RACERS.

is admired by mankind, that has been described and commended by moralists, or that is enforced in the sacred oracles, but shines forth with an unparalleled lustre in the life of our blessed LORD.

Now if it be a good maxim that to succeed well we should copy the best patterns, and learn of the best masters, should we not, as candidates for a crown of righteousness, "look unto JESUS" as our example and teacher?

Let us follow him in a spirit of humility, and with an earnest desire to have his image perfected in us, to have the ruling disposition of our minds similar to that which was in him, to be lowly, meek, obedient, gentle, patient, devout, tender-hearted, and in love forbearing with one another.

Christians have what none else can boast, a perfect example to copy after, and this they have above all things, that they are not left to follow him in their own wisdom and strength, for then they would never be able to succeed. But He who calls us to follow him, has promised us his grace to enable us to do it. He gives strength to those who need it, he enlightens the understandings of the ignorant, and those who are out of the way, he, as "the good shepherd," brings home to his fold rejoicing. He leaves not his little flock in the wilderness, where it is exposed to so many enemies, but he watches over it with tenderness, and "causeth it to lie down in green pastures, and leadeth it by the still waters." Psalm xxiii. 2.

Thus he communicates that refreshing grace which supports the souls of his sincere disciples, and causeth them to "grow like palm-trees and cedars, which bring forth fruit in their old age." Psalm xcii. 12—14. In the use of all the appointed means of grace, he meets his people and blesseth them; and causeth his face to shine upon them, agreeably to his promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. xvii. 20.

At last, when their course and work draw to an end, he supports them "in the valley of the shadow of death," guiding them through all the difficulties of that awful state, and cheering their souls in the view of dissolution with the bright prospect of immortality. When the last struggle is over, and their eyes close upon all sublunary objects, the spirits of the righteous ascend to the realms of glory, and are presented by the merciful High Priest, their adorable MEDIATOR and SAVIOUR, before the throne of GOD, as those whom he hath ransomed from the hands of the enemy, and purchased at the expense of his own most precious blood.

There shall they "serve GOD day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and GOD shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. vii. 15, 16, 17.

Such being the present and eternal advantages attending an attachment to the religion which GOD hath appointed, as the only means whereby, as condemned sinners, we can gain his favor, and be admitted into his presence, let it be our earnest care "not to neglect so great salvation!"

When we hear so many voices calling to us out of heaven, and saying, "Come up hither," our souls ought to be fired with an exalted spirit of emulation, to tread the path which leads to the same glorious inheritance.

"LET US THEN LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT, AND THE SIN WHICH DOTH MOST EASILY BESET US, AND LET US RUN WITH PATIENCE THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US, LOOKING UNTO JESUS, THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH; WHO, FOR THE JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM, ENDURED THE CROSS, DESPISING THE SHAME, AND IS SET DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF GOD."

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APPENDIX.

HE following DISSERTATIONS, though short, it is hoped will be found not only *instructive*, but in a good degree *satisfactory*, as to the *Evidences* of DIVINE REVELATION, to those for whom they are especially designed, whose reading is necessarily limited. And as to those highly favored individuals, who have been more liberally educated, and who possess the means of pursuing an extended course of investigation, they may, perhaps, consider them as introductory to the voluminous and profound writings of our celebrated biblical critics and commentators. — *Editor.*

DISSERTATION I.

THE EXISTENCE AND PERFECTIONS OF GOD.

Religion arises from belief in GOD—The phenomena of nature evince the existence of GOD—and his infinite perfections—Human depravity blinds the understanding—Serious minds have desired a revelation from GOD.

RELIGION is founded upon belief in the necessary existence and infinite perfections of GOD. Belief in GOD is the most rational exercise of the human mind; as the wisest and best of mankind in every age have acknowledged. Wise and virtuous men in every nation perceive, in all the visible parts of the material universe, the certain evidences of an almighty CREATOR. They read, in all these monuments of creation, the manifest impressions of his infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness, and confess the presence of the glorious Deity.

Contemplating the wondrous works of GOD, serious minds are strengthened in their belief. Looking up to the heavens above, the surrounding atmosphere, the air in which we breathe, the fluid ether, the spreading firmament, bespangled with brilliant stars, and adorned with two grand luminaries, the sun and moon—the former affording its benign influences, as the inexhaustible fountain of light and heat—and the whole system steering an unvarying and unerring course, in silent, regular, harmonious, beneficial motion,—every one acknowledges an infinite, almighty Agent, and feels the appropriateness of the Psalmist's language, and the sublimity of his sentiments: "The heavens declare the glory of GOD; and the firmament showeth his handiwork," Psal. xix. 1.

Pious men survey the terraqueous globe, "hanging on nothing,' poised in the air with its own weight, and its relation to other magnificent bodies, and performing its annual and diurnal revolutions, carrying in its mysterious flight-

all its vast oceans and mountains, stored with incalculable riches, and occupied by innumerable inhabitants, manifestly ordained for the service of man, their temporary lord; and while reflecting upon their own dignified form of body, and lofty faculties of mind, they are constrained to adore and bless the glorious though unseen Author. Prompted by the dictates of enlightened reason, and influenced by a spirit of genuine piety, they unite with the inspired prophet and exclaim, "O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches; so is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts." Psal. civ. 24, 25.

Rational minds confidently infer from all this *visible* "handiwork" of GOD, the reality of his adorable character, and of his *invisible* moral perfections; and, therefore, give him the glory and worship due unto his holy name; they fully admit the strength of the apostle's argument, in proving the folly and criminality of the atheistical heathens:—"For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." Rom. i. 20.

Reasonable and edifying as is this mode of reflection and argument, sensual and irreligious men do not practically admit its force, or adopt it for their spiritual benefit: "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of GOD through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts." Eph. iv. 18. "A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this;" (Psal. xcii. 6;) so as to yield the obedience of the heart to GOD. Every human being, however, in the sound exercise of his intellectual faculties, admits the correctness of the reasoning, both of the Psalmist and the apostle Paul: but serious minds, in thus reflecting on the Divine works, conscious of weakness and guilt, desire to obtain some further discoveries of their CREATOR, and to attain the knowledge of the *gracious will of God*. His favor and his blessing, for the present and for a future life, have been powerfully felt by the wisest of the heathen to be indispensably necessary; and the boon which to them has appeared most unspeakably desirable is, a REVELATION, *declaring human duty and the Divine grace, from* GOD OUR CREATOR.

DISSERTATION II.

THE BIBLE CLAIMS TO BE REGARDED AS A DIVINE REVELATION.

The Old and New Testaments claim to be divine—Such a revelation desirable—Internal evidence proves the divinity of the Scriptures—They therefore require our serious regard

CHRISTIANS have always claimed for the Holy Scriptures the honor of a Divine Revelation. Such claim was uniformly made by the Jews for the books of the Old Testament: and this claim is made by the sacred writers, as men inspired of GOD.

Divine revelation has, in all ages, appeared to be exceedingly desirable; and minds the most elevated, among the famous sages of antiquity, conscious of their ignorance, sighed with painful anxiety to be instructed by "a teacher sent from GOD." Perplexity and grief have agitated the breasts of the thoughtful among the heathen, while contemplating the miserable condition of human nature. What was the origin of mankind? Whence came our first parents? Whither are we going through time? Whence the mortality and misery of man? "If a man die, shall he live again?" Is there a future state of exist-

ence? Can we obtain the favor of our CREATOR? Will he bless us with happiness in a future life?

These are questions of the most solemn and momentous import to human beings; and they have frequently been proposed by wise men in every age and country with corresponding solemnity: but they could not be answered without the oracles of Divine revelation. These solemn inquiries have, however, all been anticipated; and they are fully resolved in the Holy Scriptures. While this sacred volume of various writings meets all the anxieties of an intelligent but guilty mortal, it plainly professes to be not the dictate of men, or of angels, but to have been given to holy prophets and teachers, by the gracious inspiration of our CREATOR.

Inestimably important as are the contents of this volume, and claiming, as it does, to be a divine revelation, its very name and character must be regarded with supreme interest by every reflecting mind. Duty and interest are united in the claims of the Bible; and nothing can be more consolatory to a serious reader than its own inviting testimony.—"All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

DISSERTATION III.

DIVINE REVELATION NECESSARY FOR MAN.

The knowledge of GOD essential to religion—The heathen sages ignorant of GOD—Their religion foolish, immoral, and atheistical—Man without Revelation universally superstitious, depraved, and miserable—No remedy but by a Revelation from GOD.

RELIGIOUS belief, to be beneficial to man, must arise from the true *knowledge* of GOD. Religion consists, indeed, in that supreme respect, sacred veneration, and filial love, which are justly due from a rational creature to his glorious CREATOR. This intelligent and holy service of the heart and life, however, has never been rendered to GOD, by any people, or by any individual, independently of the possession of Divine Revelation.

Disregarding the absurd and corrupt notions universally entertained by the vulgar among the heathen nations, it may be remarked, that the wisest of their philosophers were unable to give a rational account of the being of GOD, or a worthy representation of his nature and perfections, as our CREATOR. That which the apostle declares concerning the wisest sages of Greece and of Rome, is perfectly justified by their best writings, and by their universal practice,—that "the world by wisdom knew not GOD." 1 Cor. i. 2. "Professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible GOD into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things—who changed the truth of GOD into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, Amen." Rom. i. 22–25.

Monstrous and abominable as were the practices here described, they were universal in all nations. Human wisdom, by the mere light of nature, however refined and improved by study and learning, never was able to show in what consisted man's chief good: it would not enable the wisest philosophers to declare the sacred rule of human duty; nor the motives by which obedience to the practice of moral virtues might be enforced: it could not show the origin

of human depravity, nor the possibility or means of the pardon of sin, nor the means of eradicating the evil propensities of our nature, or even of subduing their prevailing power: neither could it assure the most anxious mind of man the certainty, or even the probability, of a future life. Doubt, depravity, crime, and misery, necessarily arose from such a state of ignorance in fallen beings: their terrified imaginations prompted them to seek relief by imprecations addressed to divinities that had no existence; and their superstitious minds led them to contrive, or to yield to the contrivances of others, representations of supposed deities, existing only in their excited fancies, and to practise every species of abominable idolatry—hence the indispensable necessity of divine revelation.

DISSERTATION IV.

DIVINE REVELATION POSSIBLE AND PROBABLE.

God the Creator of our spirits is able to communicate with them—God's innumerable mercies to man lead us to expect a revelation of his will—Reflecting men in every nation have expected it—Eminent lawgivers have pretended to have been so favored—The best human laws have not prevented human depravity—Granting a revelation seems worthy of God.

Every believer in the omnipotence of the Deity, must admit the possibility of our possessing a Divine Revelation. The infinite Spirit, by whom the human mind was created, and by whose unceasing agency it is preserved in existence and exercise, must ever be intimately present with it; and, possessing a complete knowledge of all its faculties, states, and affections, exercising at the same time a perfect control over all its operations, for the purpose of securing the great ends of his moral government, he cannot fail to be able to communicate ideas to that mind for its benefit, or to impress upon it the certain knowledge of his holy will. The denial of such power would be consistent only with the gross absurdities of materialism, excluding from the universe the notion of an intelligent, almighty Creator.

Divine Revelation being admitted to be *possible*, no conclusive argument can be drawn against the *probability* of such a boon being given to man from any of the manifest works of God. And considering the infinitely various provisions of creation, manifestly formed for the accommodation of mankind, displaying the most consummate wisdom in their appropriate adaptation to our necessities, and infinite benevolence in their design, to support and comfort us with supplies of agreeable food, to relieve and heal our frequent maladies, and to afford us delight in the use of these benefits, as the dependant creatures of God, there appears the strongest reason for our expecting a revelation of his holy will, to instruct us how to enjoy his favors, and in what way to render him honor and worship which are his due, as our Creator and Preserver.

Besides, mankind have ever shown a disposition to expect a Divine Revelation. Every nation that has admitted the existence of God, believed that he really did afford to certain distinguished individuals some knowledge of his will. Hence the pagan priests pretended to have received divine instructions in imposing their various rites upon the people: and hence also the most famous legislators of antiquity, besides Moses, who was really commissioned and inspired of God,—as Minos, Lycurgus, Numa, Solon, Zoroaster, Pythagoras, and others,—professed to hold intercourse with their gods, in establishing their laws and institutions. Several of the wisest of the pagan philosophers also,

acknowledging their need of a Divine revelation, expressed their hope tha. the Deity would grant such a favor, to lead them in the ways of truth and religion.

Human laws, however just, wise, and beneficial in their tendency, have ever been found inefficient to restrain from the commission of crimes, much less to engage mankind in the practice of perfect virtue. God himself must, therefore, interpose, and favor us with rules of virtue, and supply motives to the observance of them, such as it is difficult to withstand; or society would necessarily sink deeper and deeper into vice and misery. To maintain that God has not so interposed is to deny that the Supreme Being interests himself in the welfare of those whom he created, and whom he governs. But all our notions of the Deity lead us to contemplate him as a Being of inflexible justice. boundless goodness, and incessant beneficence, and, therefore, to regard it as extremely probable that he would favor us with the gift of a Divine Revelation.

DISSERTATION V

ORIGIN OF DIVINE REVELATION.

God, at the creation, revealed his will to his intelligent creatures—This favor especially needful to man in his fallen state—God made known his purposes of mercy to the fathers, promising a Redeemer—Sacrifices by divine appointment—God gave a written revelation by Moses—and by him the knowledge of letters—Dr. Winder, Dr. Wall, and others, attribute alphabetical writing to the inspiration of God by Moses.

Divine Revelation commenced with the creation of man, as declared in the book of Genesis. God at that time inspired the intelligent. holy, and capacious minds of his perfect creatures, Adam and Eve, with all necessary knowledge, especially of himself, their glorious and bountiful Creator. This must have been the case with all intelligent creatures, from the essential relations subsisting between the infinite Spirit and the spirits of men and angels. God must have revealed to them a knowledge of his will, as they were his creatures, dependant, and therefore accountable to their blessed Author. God, at the creation, instructed Adam and Eve in the knowledge of himself their Creator, and gave them a law, on their obedience to which, the continuance of his favor and of the life which they were then enjoying was made to depend. Gen. xv. 15–17. This law was doubtless explained, more fully than is recorded, to our first parents, while they were obedient, experiencing the friend ship of their Almighty Benefactor.

Divine Revelation became equally, or even more necessary to man after transgression had brought guilt upon his conscience, and filled his soul with terror: then the recollection of the Divine law, requiring perfect and continued obedience, could lead him only to despair; and a further revelation from God was required, possessing a new character, suitable to the condition of a guilty creature, giving information, not only concerning the rule and extent of human duty, but also the assurance of the Divine mercy: it was necessary for it to declare that sin could be forgiven, and the manner in which a criminal could be pardoned; and how a guilty, depraved creature could be re-established in the favor and image of God. This revelation was graciously afforded to our trembling first parents: God, in sovereign mercy, while pronouncing the curse, and declaring their misery and mortality, the fruit of their sin. gave them the consoling intimation of his compassion and favor, in the seasonable promise

of a Divine Redeemer, as "the seed of the woman, that should bruise the head of the serpent." Gen. iii. 17–19. This promise was, at the same time, illustrated by the institution of animal sacrifices; the design of which was to teach mankind their subjection to wrath because of sin,—that the penalty must be inflicted, if not on themselves, yet on a substitute,—and that GOD had graciously appointed a substitute— the MESSIAH—the woman's seed, who should in due time make reconciliation for iniquity by the sacrifice of himself, thus destroying the work of the devil. This merciful declaration, as explained by the ordinance of sacrifice, was the foundation of hope to sinners in the primitive ages. It was repeated, and farther illustrated by successive heavenly communications, and became the means of salvation to all who believed it as the word of GOD. Thus "by faith Abel offered unto GOD a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,"—when "the LORD had respect unto Abel, and to his offering." Gen. iv.; 4 Heb. xi. 4. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Job, and all the other pious patriarchs, believed the promises of GOD, evincing their faith in the expected Saviour by their various sacrifices, and proving by their holy lives that they had been favored with a Divine Revelation. These ancient believers handed down the doctrines which they had received, delivering them from age to age, in sacred tradition, which formed the basis and the subject of the faith of all the pious servants of GOD; for a period of about *two thousand five hundred* years, until the deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

Moses, the deliverer of Israel, was ordained to be the founder of a new dispensation of GOD to man; and that deliverance was to be its commencement. To preserve, therefore, the memory of that glorious event, GOD gave a marvellous proof of his merciful kindness, in an extended revelation of his holy will, not depending on tradition, but committed to writing—comprehending a code of moral, political, and ceremonial laws for the observance of the Israelites as a nation,—written by their inspired deliverer and lawgiver, Moses, prefixing, in the book of Genesis, a history of the original creation of all things, and of the providential government of the world by the CREATOR.

Moses, though "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," (Acts vii. 22,) did not acquire from that people the art of alphabetical writing; neither was it an invention of his own ingenuity. Various expedients have been devised to solve the difficulties with which the subject is involved: by some, letters are supposed to have been a merely human invention, ingeniously contrived to facilitate the invaluable purposes of commerce; many of the heathen considered letters to have been the gift of their imaginary gods, but Christian and Jewish authors of the greatest judgment believe that letters were given to Moses by the immediate inspiration of JEHOVAH, the true GOD.

Speech, the power of communicating our ideas to each other by vocal sound, was unquestionably GOD's original gift to man,—distinguishing him from all other animals. Alphabetical writing resembles that wonderful gift of GOD: it is only the power of communicating our thoughts at all times, absent as well as present, after death as well as when alive! The great and extensive advantages, also, derived to mankind by written documents,—as fixing the principles of legislation—recording the momentous events of political history, and of national and social transactions, may well vindicate that art as a divine gift. Surely matters of such high importance to the welfare of mankind, afford reason for believing that the art of alphabetical writing was a divine favor, worthy of the beneficence of GOD.

Pictorial representations were common, and engravings in hieroglyphical characters appear to have previously existed in Egypt and in Canaan; but there is no evidence of the prior existence of *alphabetical writing* All the na-

tions of Europe derive their letters from the ancient Latin; the Latin letters came from Greece; and the Greeks received them from the Phœnicians, by Cadmus; and the / from the Hebrews after the time of Moses, "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians:" but Egypt did not in his time possess the art of alphabetical writing, nor till after the reign of Solomon; nor, as many affirm, from an examination of their most ancient alphabet, till they received letters from the Greeks, with those who colonized that country after the death of Alexander the Great.

Many profoundly learned men have investigated this subject with the greatest care; and their examination of the most ancient testimonies leads them to this conclusion, that "till the time of Moses, the world knew nothing of letters; for we find not any laws of GOD or man written before. It is likewise most probable, that we owe them not, nor their use, to human invention, but to Divine Revelation. And it is a thing that offers itself fairly to our belief, that *God himself*, when he gave the *Ten commandments*, *written by his own finger*, to Moses, *introduced the first alphabet*."

Dr. Winder remarks: "There is something so astonishing in alphabetical writing, as may justly authorize our calling it a *Divine art*. It was perfect at first; and it has never received what may be called any improvement of *alpha bet*, from the beginning to this day. The alphabet for all languages, or what would accommodate itself to all articulate sounds, are found in the *Hebrew Decalogue*, and all the Hebrew letters except *Teth*." Besides these considerations, it is most remarkable that the writings of Moses are the most beautiful of any in the Sacred Scriptures; and that they only, the first and most ancient, contain the Hebrew language in its perfection! Hence, the period from Moses to David is called "The Golden Age of the Hebrew Language!"

Dr. Wall, in his recently published treatise on the "ORIGIN OF ALPHABETIC WRITING," after having examined the researches of the most learned antiquaries in Egyptian and Chinese science, arrives at the same conclusion, that Moses was the inventor of letters and alphabetic writing, which were given to him for the benefit of the world, by the immediate inspiration of GOD.

DISSERTATION VI.

HISTORY OF THE SACRED BOOKS OF THE SCRIPTURES

Moses the author of Genesis, Job, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy—The rest of the historical books written by Joshua, Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Ezra, Nehemiah, and others—Proverbs and Ecclesiastes by Solomon—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the other books of the prophets, by those whose names they bear—The Old Testament revised by Ezra, and completed by Simon the Just—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote the Gospels—Luke wrote the Acts—Paul wrote the fourteen Epistles, including that to the Hebrews—James, Peter, Jude, and John wrote the remaining books of the New Testament

MOSES is universally acknowledged to have been the earliest of the sacred writers. Genesis and Job appear to have been compiled by him when an exile from Egypt, during his forty years' residence in Midian. They were probably sketched in hieroglyphical characters, and written out for the use of the people, while he was employed to lead and instruct the Israelites during forty years, in the deserts of Arabia. Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, were written by Moses some time before the close of his extraordinary ministry, A. M. 2453, B. C. 1551, for the instruction of the Israelites in their obedience to GOD, and for the regulation of their civil, judicial, and religious affairs.

Some few additions were made to the five books of Moses after his death, especially the last chapter of Deuteronomy, probably by Joshua or by Samuel.

Joshua wrote the former part of the book bearing his name, which Samuel completed; that venerable prophet compiled the books of Judges and Ruth, and commenced the *first* book of Samuel. the latter part of which, and the *second* book, were written by his successors in the prophetical office, probably by Nathan and Gad. The books of Kings and Chronicles are compilations from the national records, by various prophets and scribes, and from the public genealogical tables, made or completed by Ezra, on the return of the Jews from Babylon. Ezra and Nehemiah are historical collections from similar records, some of which were originally written by themselves. Esther was written by some distinguished Jew, perhaps Mordecai; though some conjecture that it was composed by Ezra. The Psalms were written mostly by David, and some by Asaph, Moses, and other pious persons: all, or most of the book of Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, and the book of Ecclesiastes, by king Solomon: the latter book was composed when that prosperous king, towards the latter end of his life, had been led to reflect upon the vanity of all human gratifications, and to repent of his foolish and criminal idolatry: his penitence and his writings were influenced by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, with the book of Lamentations, Ezekiel, and the other books of the prophets, were written by the several holy men whose names they bear, on occasions arising from their connexion with the succeeding ages, as fore-appointed by the infinite wisdom of God. Ezra labored in revising the sacred books, aided by the Great Synagogue, consisting of *one hundred and twenty* of the elders, by whom the Jewish church was restored and reformed. "Simon the Just," who died in the year 292 B. C., was the last of them, a man of extraordinary wisdom and holiness: he is believed to have made the last revision of the Old Testament, completing the sacred canon, by adding the books of Esther and Malachi. See Dissertation X.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the four Gospels, were written by the evangelists whose names they bear. Matthew and John were apostles of Christ, and his personal attendants: Mark and Luke were intimately acquainted with some of the apostles, and the latter was a fellow-laborer and companion of Paul. Luke was also the writer of the Acts of the Apostles. Romans and the other books of the New Testament were written by the apostles to whom they are inscribed; there being the most satisfactory evidence that Hebrews was written by the apostle Paul, although it does not bear his name: and that the apostle John was the author of the book of the Revelation

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DISSERTATION VII

INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Inspired persons only could write Divine Revelation—Inspiration defined—By Dr. Henderson—Dr. O. Gregory—Dr. Stowe—Dr. Robinson—Dr. Gill—Hon. Robert Boyle—Dr. Doddridge—Jesus Christ promised this gift to his apostles—Dr. Gill on inspiration belonging only to the original Scriptures—Divine Providence in preserving the Scriptures.

Divine Revelation must necessarily be the gift of inspiration. Hence, therefore, the apostle Paul declares, concerning the books of the Old Testament, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." 2 Tim. iii. 16. Peter also, in agreement with his apostolic brother, states, "No prophecy of the Scriptures

is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. i. 20, 21.

Divine inspiration signifies, therefore, being supernaturally influenced by the Holy Spirit, and thus the prophets of God are said to have spoken as they were moved or inspired. This sacred influence, however, was evidently enjoyed in *different degrees, according to the duties or exigences* of the severa writers of the Scriptures.

Dr. Henderson defines inspiration as the "direct internal suggestion to the sacred writers, in which the recipients were wrought upon directly and immediately by the Holy Spirit, who opened their minds to perceive the things which they were to communicate to others; excited them specially to attend to them; and supplied them, as the exigences of the cases required, with the ability suitably to give expression to the matters with which they were inspired."

Dr. Olinthus Gregory defines it more largely:—"While the authors employed in the composition of the Bible exercised generally their own reason and judgment, the Spirit of God effectually stirred them up to write; appointed to each his proper portion and topic, corresponding with his natural talents, and the necessities of the church in his time; enlightened their minds, and gave them a distinct view of the truths they were to deliver; strengthened and refreshed their memories to recollect whatever they had seen or heard, the insertion of which in their writings would be beneficial; directed them to select from a multitude of facts what was proper for the edification of the church, and neither more nor less; excited afresh in their minds such images and ideas as had been laid up in their memories, and directed them to other ends and purposes than themselves would ever have done of their own accord; suggested and imprinted upon their minds such matters, words, and order, especially whenever they related to facts, discourses, or doctrines, the communication of which is the great object of Scripture, thus rendering the whole canon, at any given period, an infallible guide to true holiness and everlasting happiness."

"Inspiration, according to the Bible," says Dr. Stowe, an eminent American divine, "is just that measure of extraordinary Divine influence afforded to the sacred speakers and writers, which was necessary to secure the purpose intended, and no more. If the purpose were to excite them to write that with which they are already well acquainted, just this degree of influence was exerted. If there were the additional purpose of bringing fresh to their recollection things which had partly faded away, so much additional influence was given. If explanations and more full developments of principles were needed, the Holy Spirit gave the requisite illustrations. If truths before unknown were to be communicated, the Holy Spirit revealed them: and if future events were to be foretold, the knowledge of them was imparted by the same Divine Agent. So far, also, as the mode of communicating was necessary to the purpose intended, this also was directed by the Holy Spirit."

Dr. Robinson remarks: "Whenever, and as far as, divine assistance was necessary, it was always afforded. We perceive that in different parts of Scripture were different degrees of inspiration. God enabled Moses to give an account of the creation of the world; Joshua to record with exactness the settlement of the Israelites in the land of Canaan; David to mingle prophetic information with the varied effusions of gratitude, contrition, and piety; Solomon to deliver wise instructions for the regulation of human life; Isaiah to deliver predictions concerning the future Saviour of mankind; and Ezra to collect the sacred Scriptures into one authentic volume: 'but all these worketh that one

and the self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.' 1 Cor vii. 2. In some cases, inspiration only produced correctness and accuracy in relating occurrences, or in reciting the words of others; in other cases, it communicated ideas not only new and unknown before, but infinitely beyond the reach of unassisted human intellect; and, sometimes, inspired prophets delivered, for the use of future ages, predictions which they did not themselves comprehend, and which could not be fully understood till they were accomplished. In this restricted sense it may be asserted, that the sacred writers always wrote under the influence, or guidance, or care, of the Holy Spirit, which sufficiently established the truth and divine authority of all Scripture.

"Though it is evident that the sacred historians sometimes wrote under the immediate operations of the Holy Spirit, it does not follow that they derived from revelation the knowledge of those things which might be collected from the common sources of human intelligence. It is sufficient to believe, that by the general superintendence of the Holy Spirit, they were directed in the choice of their materials, enlightened to judge of the truth and importance of those accounts from which they borrowed their information, and prevented from recording any material error. These points being ascertained and allowed, it is of very little consequence whether the knowledge of a particular fact was obtained by any of the ordinary modes of information, or whether it was communicated by immediate revelation from God: whether any particular passage was written by the natural powers of the historian, or by the positive suggestion of the Holy Spirit."

Dr. Gill, in referring to the sacred Scriptures containing various passages or sentences, *the sentiments of which are not inspired of God*, remarks: "The inspiration pleaded for extends to all the books of the sacred Scriptures, and to all the writers of them, and principal speakers introduced in them; and though all that is contained in them is not of God, or inspired by him, as the quotations from heathen writers, the words of Satan, the speeches of bad men, and even of good men, in which some things not right are said of God, as by Job and his three friends; yet the writers of the books in which these sayings are were under divine impulse, inspiration, and direction, to commit these several things to writing; partly for the truth of historical facts, and partly to show the malice of devils and wicked men, as well as the weakness and frailty of good men; and all for our caution and instruction."

Most important is it, therefore, to discriminate between what the inspired writers themselves *teach*, and what is contained in their books; as the Hon. Robert Boyle remarks, "We must carefully distinguish betwixt *what the Scripture itself says*, and *what is only said in the Scripture*. For we must not look on the Bible as an oration of God to men, or as a body of laws, like our English statute-book, wherein it is the legislator that all the way speaks to the people; but as a collection of composures of very differing sorts, and written at very distant times; and of such composures, that though the 'holy men of God' were acted by the Holy Spirit, who both excited and assisted them in penning the Scripture, yet there are many other, besides the Author and the penmen, introduced speaking there. For, besides the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, the Four Evangelists, the Acts of the Apostles, and other parts of Scripture that are evidently historical, and wont to be so called, there are in the other books many passages that deserve the same name; and many others, wherein, though they be not mere narratives of things done, many sayings and expressions are recorded that either belong not to the Author of the Scripture, or must be looked upon as such wherein his secretaries personate others."

Divine inspiration is attributed to the whole of the collection of the sacred Scriptures, as they were received by the Jews during the ministry of JESUS CHRIST. Dr. Doddridge therefore remarks: "The inspiration, and consequently the genuineness and credibility, of the *Old* Testament, may be certainly inferred from that of the *New*, because our LORD and his apostles were so far from charging the Scribes and Pharisees (who on all proper occasions are freely censured) with having introduced into the sacred volume any merely human composition; that, on the contrary, they not only recommend a diligent and constant perusal of these Scriptures as of the greatest importance to men's eternal happiness, but speak of them as *divine oracles*, and as written by the extraordinary influence of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of the authors."

Admitting the books of the Old Testament, which relate chiefly to the limited and temporary religion of the Israelites, to have been written under Divine inspiration, we cannot but conclude the same of the Scriptures of the New Testament; as these contain the sacred and unchanging institutes for all nations of mankind down to the end of the world. JESUS CHRIST also promised the Holy Spirit to be the infallible teacher of his apostles; *to guide them into all truth, to teach them all things, to bring all things to their remembrance*, and *to abide with them for ever*. Their miraculous endowments qualifying them *to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance*, to preach the gospel in all the languages of the nations among whom they fulfilled their missionary labors, confirmed the truth and divinity of the promises of CHRIST; and while we reflect upon them as the commissioned instructers of all the world, and on their perfect harmony in their saving doctrine, if we admit the genuineness and authenticity of the books ascribed to them, we must possess the strongest assurance that the writers of the New Testament were directed by the inspiration of GOD.

Dr. Gill judiciously remarks also, that "inspiration is to be understood of the Scriptures as in the original languages in which they were written, and not of translations; unless it could be thought that the translators of the Bible into the several languages of the nations into which it has been translated, were under the Divine inspiration also in translating, and were directed of GOD to the use of words by which they have rendered the original: but this is not reasonable to suppose. The books of the Old Testament were written chiefly in the Hebrew language, unless some few passages in Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezra, and Esther, in the Chaldee language, and the New Testament in Greek: in which languages only they can be reckoned canonical and authentic: for this is like the charters and diplomas of princes, the wills or testaments of men, or any deed made by them; only the original exemplar is authentic, and not translations, and transcriptions, and copies of them, though ever so perfect: and to the Bible, in its original languages, is every translation to be brought, and by it to be examined, tried, and judged, and to be corrected and amended: and if this was not the case, we should have no certain and infallible rule to go by: for it must be either all the translations together, or some one of them: not all of them, because they agree not in all things; nor one, for then the contest would be between one nation and another which it should be, whether English, Dutch, French, &c.; and could one be agreed upon, it could not be read and understood by all: so the Papists, they plead for their vulgate Latin version, which has been decreed authentic by the council of Trent, though it abounds with innumerable errors and mistakes."

Divine inspiration cannot be claimed for the *transcribers* of the original Scriptures, and perfect accuracy in the numerous copies of them, taken before the invention of printing, could not have been expected, unless a miraculous

interposition had constantly attended every transcriber: but so great is the agreement found among the existing manuscripts, in relation to all the doctrines, precepts, and facts of the Bible, as to illustrate the admirable providence of God

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DISSERTATION VIII.

GENUINENESS OF THE BOOKS OF SCRIPTURE.

Genuineness must belong to the books of Divine Revelation—The Old Testament books existed genuine in the time of Christ, both in Hebrew and Greek—The Jews preserved their books with jealous care—The Levites were their guardians—The New Testament books were copied, translated, and circulated in all nations—The early translations substantially agree—and the ancient manuscripts, which are numerous.

Genuineness regards the *identity* of the sacred books; and it cannot but be of high importance to be satisfied in this particular with respect to those of the Scriptures. Divine revelation would have been *seriously* or *fatally* injured, if the sacred writings had not been handed down to us *genuine* and uncorrupted: but that they have been so *preserved* we have the most satisfactory evidences. We admit the probability that the *original writings* of neither Moses, the prophets, nor the apostles, any longer exist; no one pretends that the *autographs* have been preserved to our times: but no well-informed student of biblical antiquities questions the substantial agreement of the sacred Scriptures now existing with the original manuscripts of their inspired authors.

That the books of the Old Testament are genuine, we have the testimony of the Jewish nation through successive ages. They existed as we possess them in the time of our Lord and his apostles, not only in the original Hebrew, but in a Greek translation, made for the use of the numerous Jews who had descended from those whom Alexander the Great had led into Egypt to people his newly-founded cities. This translation was made nearly *three hundred* years before the advent of Christ; and before that period, notwithstanding the national disobedience to the laws of God, and the frequently-repeated reproofs, censures, and threatenings against the people, on account of their practical infidelity, their obstinacy in idolatry, and their prevailing wickedness, they generally held the sacred books in the highest reverence as the oracles of God.

Indubitable evidence of the genuineness of these books is found in the character and circumstances of the Jews. The Rev. T. Hartwell Horne remarks: "If a Jew had forged one book of the Old Testament, he must have been impelled to so bold and dangerous an enterprise by some very powerful motive. It could not be national pride, for there is scarcely one of these books which does not severely censure the national manners. It could not be love of fame, for that passion would have taught him to flatter and extol the national character; and the punishment, if detected, would have been infamy and death. The love of wealth could not produce such a forgery, for no wealth was to be gained by it."

Further, the true knowledge of the original of these books could not easily be corrupted or lost; because the tribe of Levi was consecrated for the service of God among the Israelites, especially to watch over the preservation of the sacred writings; and there never were wanting men among the other tribes, neither before, during, or after the captivity in Babylon, who held the books in high veneration as the inspired Scriptures, being themselves descendants

from the princes, judges, and prophets, who were their authors. And although the *names* of some of the sacred writers are lost in oblivion, yet as the Jews confess their ignorance, such confession is an evidence that they would not have received the books if they had not been transmitted as sacred by their ancestors: at the same time we have the clearest evidence that none of the books of the Old Testament were written later than the *fifth* century *before* the advent of CHRIST.

Every variety of evidence which the nature of the case admits is found in favor of the books of the Old Testament: but for perfect information on this point the reader is referred to Horne's "Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures."

Evidence equally, or perhaps more satisfactory, exists in favor of the books of the New Testament; as they were written on various occasions, and for the instruction of different churches and individuals; yet as they were not of a private nature, but relating to the grand interests of Christianity, and the spiritual welfare of all believers in the gospel, soon after the original writings were published, numerous copies were taken for the use of friends and the neighboring churches, and carried by apostolical men and evangelical missionaries wherever they went to proclaim the gospel of CHRIST. Conveyed into distant countries, they were soon translated into different languages, held sacred by the pastors of the churches, and read as the divine oracles in the public assemblies of the Christians.

Historical testimony proves the genuineness of the New Testament books, abounding through every age up to the time when they were written, and this is confirmed by numerous translations from the age of the apostles. The earliest of these translations extant is the Peschito, or literal Syriac version, which is clearly ascertained to have been made early in the *second*, if not in the *first* century; and this version has been in exclusive use, and held in the highest estimation, by the several sects of Christians in Syria and the East.

Equally ancient with the Peschito was the Old Italic, or original Latin version, made for the Christians at Rome, and quoted in the second century by Tertullian. While the agreement of these versions with the existing Greek furnishes strong *internal* evidence, their different and independent existence as translations, affords satisfactory proof of the antiquity and genuineness of the books of the New Testament. Besides, manuscripts of these sacred books, amounting to the number of several thousands, are to be found in the several ancient libraries throughout Christendom. More than *five hundred* have been actually examined with great care by learned men; and it is ascertained that some of them were transcribed so early as the *eighth*, *seventh*, *sixth*, and even the *fourth* centuries; thus carrying us up to nearly the times of the first publication of the apostolic writings. When, therefore, we consider the number of these manuscripts, the distant countries in which they are found, and the agreement of their contents with the quotations which the instructers of the Christian church have made in different ages, we have a perfect demonstration of the genuineness of the books of the New Testament.

DISSERTATION IX.

AUTHENTICITY OF THE SACRED BOOKS.

The sacred books have been preserved uncorrupted—Those of the Old Testament perfectly agree with the Mosaic institutions—The New Testament books are confirmed by historic testimony—and by the known condition of the countries mentioned—Divine Providence has watched over them—Ancient and modern copies agree in all the essential doctrines, facts, and precepts of Christianity.

AUTHENTICITY regards the contents, or recorded matters of fact, of the Scriptures; and that they are *authentic* every possible degree of evidence is possessed. Besides what has been advanced in the preceding sections respecting the *genuineness* of the Scriptures, it may be established beyond all doubt from the different degrees of purity in the language in which the Old Testament books were written; the peculiar institutions of the Mosaic law; the whole contents of the five books of Moses; the perfect agreement with, and dependance on, those institutions in the other writings of the sacred books, and the united historical testimony of both Jews and Gentiles.

Authenticity, as regards the New Testament, is proved equally satisfactory "That an extraordinary person, called JESUS CHRIST, flourished in Judea in the Augustan age, is a fact better supported and authenticated than that there lived such men as Cyrus, Alexander, and Julius Cæsar. That he lived in the reign of Tiberius, emperor of Rome, and that he suffered death under Pontius Pilate, the Roman Procurator of Judea, are facts that are not only acknowledged by the Jews of every subsequent age, and by the testimonies of several heathen writers, but also by Christians of every age and country, who have commemorated, and who still commemorate, the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of JESUS CHRIST, and his spiritual kingdom, by their constant and uniform profession of certain principles of religion, and by their constant and universal celebration of divine worship on the LORD'S day, or first day of the week, and likewise of the two ordinances of Baptism and the LORD'S Supper. These religious doctrines and ordinances they profess to derive from a collection of writings composed after the ascension of JESUS CHRIST, which they acknowledge to be divine, and to have been written by the first preachers of Christianity;" and this collection of writings is published in a volume called the New Testament.

That the books of the New Testament are *authentic*, as well as *genuine*, is evident from their preservation already noticed; from the impossibility of forgery; from various historical testimony; from the contents and harmony of the several books; from the character of the writers; from the peculiar language and style of the writings; and from the circumstantial minuteness of detail in reference to persons, places, and things, known to have existed at that period in Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Dr. Whitby asks, with regard to the uncorrupted genuineness of the New Testament, "Who can imagine that GOD, who sent his SON to declare this doctrine, and his apostles, by the assistance of the HOLY SPIRIT, to indite and speak it, and by so many miracles confirmed it to the world, should suffer any wicked persons to corrupt and alter any of those terms on which the happiness of mankind depends? It is absurd to say that GOD repented of his good-will and kindness to mankind, in vouchsafing the gospel to them; as that he so far maligned the good of future generations, that he suffered wicked men to rob them of all the good intended to them by this declaration of his holy will"

Differences have been found in the text of many manuscripts of the New Testament: this, however, cannot affect the authenticity of the sacred books. Yet it may be remarked, that some persons have been alarmed at the idea of various readings in the inspired writings. That these should be found, is what might have been expected, unless a perpetual miracle had been wrought to preserve the transcribers from any error. But considering the many thousands of manuscript copies of the Scriptures which must have been made during the period of *fourteen hundred years* before the invention of printing, and that many transcribers were ignorant or careless, though skilful in the art of writing, *errata* might reasonably be expected. These persons were not supernaturally preserved in their mechanical work of transcribing: and mistakes in one copy would unavoidably be propagated in all that were taken from it, while each copy might have peculiar faults of its own; so that various readings would thus be increased in proportion to the number of transcripts. But in addition to errors thus occasioned, transcribers might increase various readings by substituting, through ignorance, one letter, or even word, for another; or through inattention omit a word, a line, or even a whole period. These causes are such as are found still to operate in this way in transcribing written documents: and it cannot be matter of surprise that in these different ways, reckoning all the trifling diversities of single words, syllables, and letters, many thousands of various readings should have been discovered, in collating several hundred manuscripts of the whole or parts of the Scriptures. Still it is most satisfactory to be assured, by those who have paid most attention to this branch of study, that all the various readings yet discovered by no means interfere with a single fact, precept, or doctrine of Christianity.

DISSERTATION X.

COLLECTION OF THE SCRIPTURES INTO A VOLUME.

The sacred books written at different times—Completion of the Old Testament—The Great Synagogue—Division of the Old Testament Books—New Testament books written for different churches—were collected gradually—Jerome's catalogue—Eusebius's list—Origen's catalogue—Rev. T. Horne's review of facts—Dr. Henderson's testimony

Divine Revelation, being given "at sundry times, and in divers manners," is not limited to any particular writing, but contained, in its successive developments, through all the several books of Scripture. These, as stated in the preceding sections, were written at different times, by many individuals, though we possess them in a single volume: but a brief history of its collection will not fail to interest the inquiring Christian.

Moses was the author of the first five books in the Old Testament, which are frequently called the "Pentateuch," a Greek word signifying *five instruments* or *volumes*, and the "Law of Moses:" this has been regarded as a kind of distinct or independent volume; to which, in successive ages, the other sacred books were added, as they were published, under the direction of inspired prophets. Ezra, after the return of the Jews from Babylon, revised the copies of the sacred books extant, and added several others; and the whole collection was completed, in the addition of the books of Esther and Malachi, as is believed, by the direction of the *Great Synagogue.*

Dr. Prideaux states, "What the Jews called the Great Synagogue was a number of elders, amounting to one hundred and twenty, who succeeding some

to others, in a continued series, from the return of the Jews again into Judea, after the Babylonish captivity, to the time of Simon the Just, labored in the restoring of the Jewish church and state in that country. In order thereto, the Holy Scriptures being the rule they were to go by, their chief care and study was to make a true collection of those Scriptures, and publish them to the people."

The canon of the Old Testament being thus completed, the whole was translated into Greek; and in the time of our SAVIOUR'S ministry it was possessed by the Jews both in Greek and in Hebrew. The whole collection, however, was regarded under three divisions—THE LAW, THE PROPHETS, and HOLY WRITINGS—evidently referred to by the evangelist, Luke xxiv. 27. The *Law* comprised the five books of Moses; the *Prophets* included Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets; and the *Holy Writings* consisted of the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Solomon's Song, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Chronicles: some made a slight variation from this arrangement.

The New Testament books, having been written to different and distant parties, required some time for their complete collection; this, however, was partly done during the life of the apostles; as is clear from Peter referring to what Paul had written "in all his epistles," and to "the other Scriptures," 2 Pet. iii. 16.

"Different churches received different books," says Mr. Horne, "according to their situation and circumstances. Their canons were gradually enlarged; and at no very great distance of time from the age of the apostles, with a view to secure to future ages a divine and perpetual standard of faith and practice, these writings were collected into one volume under the title of the 'New Testament,' or the 'Canon of the New Testament.'"

Jerome, who was ordained presbyter at Antioch, A. D. 374, and translated the whole Bible into Latin, gives a sacred catalogue, including all our books of the New Testament.

Eusebius, bishop of the Christian church at Cesarea, and the greatest ecclesiastical historian of that age, gives a list of the whole of these, as universally received, except the Epistles of James and Jude, the Second Epistle of Peter, the Second and Third Epistles of John, and the Revelation; concerning which the churches were not unanimous.

Origen, the most extensively learned of all the fathers of the church, and a commentator on the whole Scriptures, was born in Egypt, A. D. 184: his catalogue of the sacred books includes "the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, fourteen Epistles of Paul, two of Peter, three of John," and "the Book of the Revelation." James and Jude only are omitted; but these are acknowledged in other parts of the works of Origen.

From these brief notices we may learn the high estimation in which the books of the New Testament were held, and what care was taken in completing the sacred canon by the early Christians. Mr. Horne treats more largely on this subject, and then remarks: "In reviewing the body of evidence that has now been stated, it is a consideration of great importance that the witnesses lived at different times, and in countries widely remote from one another; Clement flourished at Rome, Ignatius at Antioch, Polycarp at Smyrna, Justin Martyr in Syria, Irenæus in France, Athenagoras at Athens, Theophilus at Antioch, Clement and Origen at Alexandria, Tertullian at Carthage, and Augustine at Hippo, both in Africa; and, to mention no more, Eusebius at Cesarea. Philosophers, rhetoricians, and divines, men of acuteness and learning, all concur to prove that the books of the New Testament were equally well known in distant

countries, and received as authentic by men who had no intercourse with one another."

Dr Henderson adds, "Another satisfactory source of evidence in favor of the canon of the New Testament, as now received, is the fact that these books, and these books alone, were quoted as sacred Scripture by all the fathers, living in parts of the world the most remote from each other. The truth of this assertion will fully appear from what may be said of the particular books. Now how can it be accounted for that these books, and these alone, should be cited as authority in Asia, Africa, and Europe? No other reason can be assigned than one of these two—either they knew no other books which claimed to be canonical; or, if they did, they did not esteem them of equal authority with those which they cited. On either of these grounds the conclusion is the same,—THAT THE BOOKS QUOTED AS SCRIPTURE ARE ALONE THE CANONICAL BOOKS."

DISSERTATION XI.

THE DIVINE AND EXCLUSIVE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Divine Revelation has the force of a law from God—Our SAVIOUR appealed to the Scriptures as of supreme authority—Martyrs and Reformers made the same appeal—Testimony of Luther—of Bishop Hooper—of the Rev. W. Chillingworth—Sixth article of the Church of England—Testimony of Bishop Jewell—of Archbishop Usher.

DIVINE Revelation must necessarily be the *sole* and *exclusive* rule in all things relating to the religious belief and practice of every human being. This is the grand and fundamental principle of true Protestantism: it is, in reality, the sacred basis of Christianity. Hence our blessed LORD, as the MESSIAH, the "Teacher sent from GOD," made his appeals to the written testimony of the ancient prophets: and hence he commanded his hearers to "search the Scriptures." The apostles in this respect uniformly followed the example of their Master.

Every man possessing the Word of GOD is required, therefore, to read and regard so as to believe the Scriptures for himself, that he may become "wise unto salvation," as a private Christian; and especially that he may become furnished for his responsible duties in giving instruction to others, if he be a minister of the gospel of CHRIST. Martyrs and confessors of CHRIST, in every age, have acted on this principle. Luther rested upon this foundation in opposing the pope's authority, and in accomplishing all his mighty triumphs in the glorious work of the Reformation.

"Setting aside an implicit dependance on all human writings," says that celebrated reformer, "let us strenuously adhere to the Scriptures alone. The primitive church acted thus: she must have acted so; for she had no writings of the fathers. Let the fathers be allowed to be holy men, still they were only men, and men inferior to prophets and apostles. It is enough that we have learned from them the duty of studying and diligently laboring in the Scriptures: it is not necessary that we should approve of all their works."

All the reformers held this principle sacred, especially in their controversies with the Romish church, disallowing all human authority, either as appended to the Scriptures, or in giving them an exposition. Bishop Hooper, therefore, wrote, in his 'Clear Confession of Christian Faith,' "I believe that the Word of GOD is of far greater authority than the church; which word alone sufficiently shows and teaches us all things that in any wise concern our salvation, both

what we ought to do, and what to leave undone. The same Word of God is the true pattern and perfect rule after which all faithful people ought to govern and order their lives, without turning either to the right hand or to the left hand; without changing anything thereof; without putting to it, or taking from it, knowing that all the works of God are perfect, but most chiefly his Word."

Perhaps the most pernicious dogma that has ever been published among the professors of Christianity, is that which asserts the office of a priest, or of the body of a priesthood, to give an authoritative interpretation of the Scriptures. Irreligious men usurping that office, every form of error has been promulgated, and the most intolerant and destructive maxims of policy have been established, under the deceitful claim, which virtually subverts the divine authority of the Scriptures. Our blessed Lord has mercifully ordained the preaching of the gospel to be the means of "turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;" but he requires each of his disciples to "try every spirit," and examine doctrines by the light of his sacred Word. All upright Protestants hold this principle: hence the famous Chillingworth declares, "The Bible, I say, the Bible only is the religion of Protestants. I for my part, after a long, and, as I believe and hope, impartial search of the true way to eternal happiness, do profess plainly that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot but on this rock only. I see plainly, and with my own eyes, that there are popes against popes; councils against councils; some fathers against others; the same fathers against themselves; consent of fathers of one age against a consent of fathers of another age; the church of one age against the church of another age; traditive interpretations of Scripture are pretended, but there are none found. In a word, there is no sufficient certainty, but of Scripture only, for any considerate man to build upon."

Chillingworth's sound Protestant doctrine is thus declared in the *sixth* article of the church of England—"Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, of whose authority was never any doubt in the church."

Bishop Jewell, one of the most famous divines who survived the persecutions in the reign of queen Mary, states this grand Protestant principle thus:—"We receive and embrace all the canonical Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments; and we give our gracious God most hearty thanks that he hath set up this light for us, which we ever fix our eyes upon, lest by human frauds, or the snares of the devil, we should be seduced to errors or fables. We own them to be the heavenly voices by which God hath revealed and made known his will to us. In them, all that is necessary for our salvation is abundantly and plainly contained, as Origen, St. Augustine, St. Chrysostom, and St. Cyril have taught us. They are the very might and power of God unto salvation; they are the foundations of the apostles and prophets, upon which the church of God is built; they are the most certain and infallible rule by which the church may be reduced, if she happen to stagger, slip, or err; *by which all ecclesiastical doctrines ought to be tried. No law, no tradition, no custom, is to be received or continued, if it be contrary to Scripture;* no, though St. Paul himself, or an angel from heaven, should come and teach otherwise. Gal. i. 8."

Dr. Usher, one of the most learned divines in the age following the Reformation, and for some years archbishop of Armagh, declares—"The books of Holy Scripture are so sufficient for the knowledge of the Christian religion,

hat they do most plentifully contain all doctrine necessary to salvation. They being perfectly profitable to instruct to salvation in themselves; and all other imperfectly profitable thereunto, further than they draw from them. Whence it followeth, that we need no unwritten verities, no traditions or inventions of men no canons of councils, no sentences of fathers, much less decrees of popes, to supply any supposed defect of the written word, or for to give us a more perfect direction in the worship of God and the way of life, than is already expressed in the canonical Scriptures. Matt. xxiii. 8; John v. 39. Finally, these Holy Scriptures are *the rule and line, the square and light, whereby to try and examine all judgments and sayings of men and angels.* John xii. 48; Gal. i. 9. All traditions, revelations, decrees of councils, opinions of doctors, &c., are to be embraced so far forth as they may be proved out of the divine Scriptures, and not otherwise. So that from them only all doctrine concerning our salvation must be drawn and derived."

DISSERTATION XII.

GENERAL DESIGN OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Divine Revelation designs the glory of God in the happiness of mankind—informing us concerning creation and providence—especially our duty and the means of salvation by Jesus Christ.

Divine Revelation, as an inestimable boon from heaven, cannot be conceived to have been given for a less noble purpose than that of manifesting the glorious perfections and the infinitely excellent character of God, in promoting the improvement and happiness of his rational creatures. This worthy design is evidently pursued throughout the various books of the sacred writings in all the wonderful discoveries which they communicate, in all the holy laws and precepts which they enjoin, and in all the exceeding great and precious promises which they make, in the name of God our Creator.

Man, being an intelligent creature, but in a mortal, and consequently miserable condition, needed information on the most important subjects, suited to his mysterious nature and his present circumstances in this world, and which he could obtain from no other source than the Fountain of life and the Father of lights. Moses was inspired, therefore, with the evident design of giving such satisfaction to the human mind; and hence he begins by making known the origin of all things in the universe, visible and invisible, especially of those in the heavens and on the earth, as the work of an almighty, wise, and beneficent Creator, whose infinite goodness prompted him to create innumerable beings with intelligent natures, capable of contemplating their glorious Maker, and of receiving the expressions of his love and favor, as the means of securing and advancing their happiness in his blissful service. This inspired servant of God has therefore, given us an account of the origin of all things, and a detail of the creation of the various tribes of vegetable and animal existences on earth as subjected to man, their appointed lord: he has informed us also of the originally perfect, holy, and happy condition of our first parents in the paradise of Eden, where in loyal obedience they enjoyed a delightful intercourse with their bountiful, condescending, and gracious Creator.

Divine Revelation was designed to teach us the doctrine of God's universal, wise, and righteous providence over all his creatures, and to declare the origin of all the misery and mortality of mankind as the natural and necessary consequences of disobedience to the holy will of their Creator. Moses has, there-

fore, fully detailed these things, with GOD'S merciful intimation of an all-sufficient REDEEMER. He has also unfolded to us the vindication of GOD'S righteousness in the universal deluge to remove the corrupt race of mankind, and the history of the subsequent origin of nations, many of them still distinct and peculiar, of the wide dispersion of men over the face of all the earth, of the remarkable diversity of human languages, with endless variety of manners and habits which distinguish mankind, especially in the vicinities of the manifest birthplace of the early fathers of the world

Besides these important facts, Divine Revelation makes known to us the history of GOD'S dispensations with regard to religion, for the preservation and purity of which the family of Abraham we see specially selected and made the depository of his laws and promises, written by his inspired servants to promote intelligence, justice, holiness, and happiness among the children of men, preparatory to the perfect dispensation of mercy and salvation, by the advent and universal kingdom of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

DISSERTATION XIII.

ULTIMATE DESIGN OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

GOD'S grand design in the Scriptures is to promote the salvation of sinners by JESUS CHRIST—This is more fully declared throughout the New Testament—especially to sanctify and prepare believers for life everlasting.

DIVINE Revelation, as we have seen, was designed *generally* to promote the intellectual, moral, and social improvement of mankind, in the rational and delightful service of GOD. It has, however, an *ultimate* design, which contemplates another, an immortal state in the kingdom of heaven. The Scriptures teach us, therefore, that it has been with this great purpose in view especially that the sacred volume is to be regarded as worthy of its blessed Author: this purpose, as declared in the emphatic language of the inspired apostle, is to make men "wise unto salvation through faith in CHRIST JESUS." But in effecting this great work, the Scriptures form the instrument of the HOLY SPIRIT, to enlighten, regenerate, and sanctify believers in this world, restoring them while on earth to the moral image of their CREATOR, for the purpose of their enjoying in this world fellowship with him through JESUS CHRIST, and of thereby qualifying them to inherit eternal felicity in heaven, among myriads of holy angels in the kingdom and glory of GOD.

"JESUS CHRIST and him crucified" for the sins of the world, with the things relating to his kingdom, forms the grand subject of the books of the New Testament. These books, which complete the celestial records in the volume of Divine Revelation, were written to declare to us the infinite dignity and the glorious divinity of the SON of GOD, and the exceeding riches of his grace, in taking our degraded human nature into personal union with himself, thus to become capable of obedience to the Divine law for transgressors, and to make peace through the blood of his cross, in giving his soul an offering for sin. Pardon of all iniquity, sacred peace of conscience, and justification from all things that would endanger the soul's acceptance at the tribunal of judgment, are, therefore, declared and offered to all penitent believers in the name of CHRIRT: and complete sanctification, consolation of heart, and instruction by the HOLY SPIRIT, are promised to all who seek these blessings by prayer at the throne of mercy and grace. Immortality and eternal life in a future celestial state are fully

taught to us in the Scriptures, and freely promised to all who embrace the doctrine of JESUS CHRIST; and every style of address, every form of appeal and invitation these gospel records employ to engage mortal sinners to be reconciled to GOD, and to receive the inestimably precious gift of salvation by JESUS CHRIST.

This ultimate design of the Scriptures will at once be acknowledged as illustrating the abounding grace of GOD; and the consideration that "all nations, kindred, tongues, and people," with their eternal welfare, are included in it, must excite the highest admiration and joy in every enlightened and renewed mind, as it does among the angels in heaven. Yet the Divine benevolence has decreed a millennium of glory even on earth, when "all flesh shall see the salvation of GOD"—when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea," and when "all shall know his blessed name from the least even unto the greatest."

How worthy, therefore, of the noblest powers of our minds being employed in studying the Holy Scriptures for our own personal benefit! And "how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation," thus testified by prophets and apostles, under the inspiration of GOD?

DISSERTATION XIV.

TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Translations indispensable—The Old Testament translated into Greek—This made in Egypt for the Jews using that language—Dr. Prideaux's account—Professor Rollin's—The New Testament written in Greek—Early translated into the language of Rome—Several Latin Translations—The Old Italic—Jerome's Version—This called the VULGATE—This the standard of the Roman Catholics in appealing to the Scriptures.

DIVINE Revelation, to be universally useful, would require to be translated into the languages of all nations. Such, to a great extent, has already been the case, and its utmost accomplishment is shortly anticipated from various intelligent agents employed in its progress. Some brief historical notices of the translation of the Scriptures cannot fail to edify every reader, as they will illustrate the authenticity of the sacred books still further, and exhibit the gracious design and admirable operations of the providence of GOD.

The Old Testament, it has already been observed, was translated first into the Greek language nearly *three hundred* years before the advent of Christ. This version is called by scholars the *Septuagint*, frequently expressed in short thus, "LXX.," from the number of seventy, or seventy-two Jewish elders, who were said to have been employed in this important work, to gratify Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt.

The true reason of this translation, according to the most learned men, was the dispersion of the Jews among the nations using the Greek language, by intercourse with whom they forgot their native tongue, and were unable to read the Scriptures, or understand them in the original Hebrew. This transaction was, however, an important link in the chain of divine providence in favor of the church, and it may be necessary to state a few more particulars concerning its progressive history.

Dr. Prideaux thus gives a condensed account of it: "Alexander the Great, on building Alexandria, brought there various colonies to people his new city, among whom were a great many Jews. To these he granted the free use of their own laws and religion. His successor, Ptolemy Soter having fixed the

seat of his empire in that city, brought there many more of this nation to increase the strength of the place; and having granted them the same privileges with the Macedonians and other Greeks, they soon grew to be a great part of the population. Intercourse with the Greeks necessitated them to learn their language, by which they forgot their own, as before at Babylon they had forgotten it, and had learned the Chaldee. This rendered it necessary to have the Scriptures translated for their use, which at first was limited to the five books of Moses, as the law only was read in their synagogues; but afterwards, when the prophetical books came into use in the public worship, they also were translated. By this means, therefore, it was that wherever the apostles went preaching the gospel, they found the Scriptures in the Jewish synagogues which were in the Grecian cities, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles."

Professor Rollin, the historian, piously remarks upon this truly evangelical preparation: "In this manner did God prepare the way for the preaching of the gospel, which was then approaching, and facilitate the union of so many nations of different languages and manners into one society, and the same worship and doctrines, by the instrumentality of the finest, most copious, and correct language that was ever spoken in the world, and which became common to all the countries that were conquered by Alexander."

Rome having become the mistress of all the civilized world before the advent of the Messiah, her language prevailed in many countries, especially in western Europe and in the north of Africa. Latin was gradually supplanting the Greek as a general language in northern Africa, and the Jews settled west of Egypt had begun to translate the Old Testament into that language, and it became requisite that the Scriptures should be translated into Latin for the benefit of the nations of Europe. This, therefore, was accomplished soon after the several books of the New Testament were published; and in the second century, the sacred writings, or at least most of the books, were translated into the Italic, for the use of the Christians whose native tongue was Latin.

Many versions of this were soon found to exist; but one appears to have acquired a more extensive circulation than the rest, and for several ages it was used under the title of the *Vetus Itala*, or *Old Italic*. This is believed to have been executed early in the second century: "at least it was quoted by Tertullian," as bishop Marsh remarks, "before the close of the century. But before the end of the fourth century the alterations, either designed or accidental, which were made by transcribers of the Latin Bible, were become as numerous as the alterations in the Greek Bible, before it was corrected by Origen."

Jerome, therefore, at the request, and under the patronage of Damasus, bishop of Rome, towards the close of the *fourth* century, undertook to revise this translation, and make it more conformable to the original Greek. Jerome completed this revision A.D. 390 or 391, the Old Testament after the Hexaplar text of Origen, which he went to consult at Cesarea. Before, however, he had finished this work, Jerome commenced a translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew into Latin; that those Christians who used that language only, knowing the meaning of the Hebrew text, might be better able to maintain their controversial discussions with the Jews.

Jerome's translation by degrees obtained such esteem that it received the approbation of pope Gregory I., and ever since the seventh century it has been exclusively adopted by the Romish church, under the name of the Vulgate Version; and in the sixteenth century it was pronounced *authentic* by a decree of the Council of Trent. It was also commanded that in all sermons, expositions and disputations, in which the Bible was publicly read, exclusive reference should be made to the Vulgate.

Bishop Lowth remarks: "Upon this ground many contended that the Vulgate

version was dictated by the Holy Spirit, at least was providentially guarded against all error; was consequently of Divine authority, and more to be regarded than even the original Greek and Hebrew texts. And, in effect, the decree of the council, however limited and moderated by the explanation of the more judicious divines, has given to the Vulgate such a high degree of authority, that in this instance at least, the translation has taken place of the original; for these translators, instead of the Hebrew and Greek texts, profess to translate the Vulgate."

Many alterations and errors were found to exist in the numerous manuscript copies of the Vulgate; and these were corrected from time to time in new editions, differing greatly from each other, published by order of different popes, as well as by private individuals, especially since the invention of printing. Still the Vulgate is valuable as a version, and worthy of being read by every capable student of the Scriptures. "Although the Latin Vulgate," Mr. T. H. Horne remarks, "is neither inspired nor infallible, as Morinus, Suarez, and other advocates of the Romish church have attempted to maintain, yet it is allowed to be in general a faithful translation, and sometimes exhibits the sense of Scripture with greater accuracy than the more modern versions; for all those which have been made in modern times, by divines in communion with the church of Rome, are drawn from the Latin Vulgate, which, in consequence of the decree of the Council of Trent above noticed, has been substituted for the original Hebrew and Greek texts."

DISSERTATION XV.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Latin the language of the civilized and scholars in Britain for many centuries—Bede, King Alfred, and Archbishop Elfred, translate some of the sacred books into Anglo-Saxon—A translation of the whole Bible about 1290—Trevisa and Wycliffe make translations—Tindal's translation the first printed—Coverdale finishes this translation, dedicates it to Henry VIII.—Tindal martyred—Coverdale improves his version—Patronised by Archbishop Cranmer and Lord Cromwell—Published by royal authority—Cromwell put to death—Edward VI. patronises the Bible—Geneva Bible—Bishops' Bible under Queen Elizabeth—King James orders a new translation—This forms our Authorized Version.

BRITAIN, having been conquered by the Romans, received, with their legions, their governors, their arts, and many of their laws and customs, the extensive prevalence of their language. Latin was, therefore, commonly used by those who aspired to public employments, by those who were trained with a superior education, and by the ministers of religion; though it seems probable that the doctrines of Christ were preached to the people in their native tongue. Britain was, however, in the *fifth* century abandoned by the Romans; and most of the country, in a short time, fell under the power of the Saxons, whose language soon generally prevailed among the people.

Translations of various parts of the Bible are known to have been made by several eminent men into the language of the Anglo-Saxons. Bede, the *venerable* or *wise Saxon*, a monk of Northumberland, finished a translation of the Gospel by John on the day of his death, A. D. 735. King Alfred, who died A. D. 900, made some attempts at translation; and Elfric, or Elfred, archbishop of Canterbury, about the year 995, appears to have translated the five books of Moses, Joshua, Judges, and Job, and perhaps some other parts of the Scriptures.

Popish enmity to the Scriptures prevailed in those dark ages; and several centuries elapsed before any effectual progress was made in this good work:

but about the year 1290 a translation of the Bible was made by some unknown individual, and *three* manuscript copies of it are found in the Bodleian Library, and the libraries of Christ church, and Queen's College, Oxford.

John de Trevisa, vicar of Berkeley, Gloucestershire, who died A. D. 1397, is said to have translated at least many passages of the Old and New Testaments into English, at the request of his patron, Lord Berkeley.

John Wycliffe, however, is generally admitted to have made the first complete translation of the Bible into English, about the year 1380: his version of the New Testament was printed first in 1731: and there exist several manuscript copies of his translation of the whole Bible in public libraries.

William Tindal has nevertheless the honor of having executed the first English translation of the Scriptures that was ever printed. This great man was obliged to withdraw to the Continent, to be able to prosecute that important work in security. Tindal was assisted by John Frith or Fry, and William Roye, two English exiles; and his New Testament was printed A. D. 1526, at Antwerp or Hamburg; but most of the copies of it were bought up and burnt, by order of Tonstal, bishop of London. Another edition, corrected and improved, was soon published, besides several editions by the booksellers of Holland, before 1530; and several more by the translator himself by the year 1534.

Tindal obtained valuable assistance from Miles Coverdale, who was also in exile, by whom the translation of the whole Bible was completed and published in 1535, dedicated to king Henry VIII. Lord Cromwell, the king's vicar-general and vicegerent in ecclesiastical affairs, published injunctions to the clergy, by the royal authority, in 1536, requiring every parson, or proprietary of any parish church within this realm, to provide a book of the whole Bible, both in Latin and English, and lay them in the choir, before the first of August, for every man to have the liberty of reading the Word of GOD.

While this edition was in a course of preparation, however, Tindal was apprehended and imprisoned in 1534, by means of the treachery of Henry Philips, an Englishman, who had been basely hired for that service by the council of Henry VIII.; and after an imprisonment of about eighteen months, he was condemned as a heretic, under a decree of the emperor Charles V., and, after being strangled, he was burnt to ashes, in 1536, at Vilvorde or Filford Castle, between Antwerp and Brussels. This exemplary martyr for CHRIST, when near to the place of execution, repeatedly prayed, "*Lord, open the King of England's eyes!*" Tindal's assistants in the work of CHRIST were sought for; and two of them eventually shared the fate of their martyred friend; John Frith at Smithfield in London, and William Roye in Portugal.

Tindal's labors were still pursued by his learned coadjutor, Miles Coverdale, assisted by John Rogers, who became afterwards the first martyr for CHRIST under queen Mary. Coverdale revised the whole Bible, comparing it with the Hebrew and Greek, and the translations into Latin and German; adding notes and prefaces from the German version by Luther. It was printed at Zurich, in 1535, under the assumed name of Thomas Matthews, and published in England, by a royal license, granted by Lord Cromwell, recommended by archbishop Cranmer, and bishops Latimer and Shaxton. This translation of the Bible, again revised by Coverdale, with prefaces added by Cranmer, was printed in England in 1539, and called "*Cranmer's Bible.*" Several editions of this Bible were printed in the following year, 1540; and, by royal proclamation, every parish was commanded to provide a copy of it to be placed in the church, for the free use of the public, under the penalty of *forty* shillings a month for disobedience.

Lord Cromwell being most unjustly and perfidiously put to death by Henry VIII in 1540, the popish bishops gained strength at court, and procured the

partial suppression of the Bible by order of the king, and the cause of the Scriptures declined until the death of Henry VIII. Edward VI. restored the Bible, and greatly advanced the Reformation. Queen Mary interdicted the use of the Bible, and put to death many of its most learned and excellent defenders; but it was again restored under queen Elizabeth.

Scriptural knowledge continued to advance; and in the reign of Mary some English exiles at Geneva, the chief of whom was Coverdale, with John Knox, the famous reformer of Scotland, made a new translation of the New Testament which was printed in 1559, and another edition of it in 1560; and the same year they published the whole Bible. This is called the "Geneva Bible:" it contains marginal readings and annotations, the chapters of the New Testament, for the first time in English, being divided into verses, after the Greek Testament of Robert Stephens, printer to the king of France, with other important helps: on these accounts it was greatly prized, especially for private and family reading.

Dr. Parker, having been elevated to be archbishop of Canterbury by queen Elizabeth, engaged some learned men to prepare a new version of the Bible. This, with the chapters divided into verses, was published in 1568, and called the "Bishops' Bible." This translation was used in the churches; but the Geneva Bible was preferred for private reading, on account of its expository notes; and more than *thirty* editions of it were required in as many years; so highly was it esteemed as a faithful version of the Scriptures.

King James disliked the Geneva Bible, on account of some of its notes; and after many objections had been made against the Bishops' Bible at the "Hampton Court Conference," in 1603, Dr. Reynolds, the chief of the Puritan divines, having requested the king to appoint some learned men to the work, he gave his royal commands the next year for the making of a new translation of the Bible. Forty-seven of the most learned divines of both universities were employed in this revision of the Scriptures: the work was commenced in 1607; completed in 1610; and printed in 1611, with a preface by the translators addressed to the readers, and a dedication to king James.

King James's version, however, is not a new translation, but a revision, as is evident both from the manner in which the undertaking was prosecuted, and from the work itself: it differs but little from the other versions; many paragraphs together being the same, or only with the alteration of a word in a verse; and after its publication the others fell into disuse. "King James's Bible" therefore, revised and corrected, especially in the spelling of many words, by Dr. Blayney, in 1769, has continued to the present time as the "authorized version" of the Holy Scriptures in the English language; and, except with a commentary or notes, this *authorized* translation is by law forbidden to be printed, except by the *five* privileged parties in Great Britain.

DISSERTATION XVI.

EXCELLENCY OF THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Perfection cannot be said of any translation of the Scriptures—The Authorized Version is not held to be perfect—Yet it is good, as is testified by John Selden—Dr. Doddridge—Dr. J. Taylor—Dr. Gill—Dr. Geddes—Dr. Beattie—Rev. T. Scott—Dr. A. Clarke—Professor Stuart.

TRANSLATIONS of the Holy Scriptures, however faithfully, learnedly, and carefully made, it would be difficult to pronounce *perfect;* for they would still

be human works, unless they had been done under the Divine inspiration. Our celebrated English version is not perfect: it was not pretended to be perfect by the learned translators themselves. "For what ever was perfect under the sun," they ask, in their general preface, "where apostles, or apostolic men, that is, men endued with an extraordinary measure of GOD'S Spirit, and privileged with the privilege of infallibility, had not their hands?"

Unlearned English readers may, nevertheless, rest perfectly satisfied of the general fidelity of our translation of the Bible: and they will not fail to be edified by the testimonies of a few of the most eminent scholars, who have been fully competent to form a correct opinion concerning the literary character of the "Authorized Version of the Scriptures:" they shall be given, therefore, from learned men of different denominations of Christians.

1. *John Selden*, a learned lawyer, and one of the greatest men of his age, who died in 1654, wrote—"The English translation of the Bible is the best translation in the world, *and renders the sense of the original best, taking in for the English translation of the Bishops' Bible, as well as King Jumes's.* The translators in king James's time took an excellent way. That part of the Bible was given to him who was most excellent in such a tongue; and then they met together, and one read the translation, the rest holding in their hands some Bible, either of the learned tongues, or French, Spanish, Italian, &c. If they found any fault, they spoke; if not, he read on. There is no book so translated as the Bible for the purpose."

2. *Dr Doddridge*, a learned expositor of the New Testament, and president of a college for the education of ministers of the Independent denomination, who died in 1751, writes: "On a diligent comparison of our translation with the original, we find that of the New Testament, and I might also add that of the Old, in the main faithful and judicious. You know, indeed, that we do not scruple, on some occasions, to animadvert upon it; but you also know, that these remarks affect not the fundamentals of religion, and seldom reach any further than the beauty of a figure, or at most the connexion of an argument."

3. *Dr. John Taylor*, the very learned author of the Hebrew and English Concordance, was in his religious creed an Arian, and died in 1761. He says: "In above the space of one [now two] hundred years, learning may have received considerable improvements; and by that means some inaccuracies may be found in a translation more than a [now two] hundred years old. But you may rest fully satisfied, that as *our English translation* is in itself by far the most excellent book in our language, so it is a pure and plentiful fountain of divine knowledge, giving a true, clear, and full account of the divine dispensations, and of the gospel of our salvation: insomuch that whoever studies the Bible, the ENGLISH BIBLE, is sure of gaining that knowledge and faith, which, if duly applied to the heart and conversation, *will infallibly guide him to eternal life.*"

4. *Dr. John Gill*, author of the most voluminous commentary on the Bible, was a Baptist minister of extraordinary learning, and died in 1771. He says: "Let not now any be uneasy in their minds about translations because they are not upon an equality with the original text, and *especially about our own;* for as it has been the will of GOD, and appears absolutely necessary that so it should be, that the Bible should be translated into different languages, that all may read it, he has taken care in his providence to raise up men capable of such a performance, in various nations, and particularly in ours; for whenever a set of men have been engaged in this work, as were in our nation, men well skilled in the languages, and partakers of the grace of GOD, of sound principles, and of integrity and faithfulness, having the fear of GOD before their eyes, they have never failed of producing a translation worthy of acceptation; and in which,

though they have mistook some words and phrases, and erred in some lesser and lighter matters, yet not so as to affect any momentous article of faith or practice; and therefore, such translations as ours may be regarded as the rule of faith. And if any scruple should remain on the minds of any on this account, it will be sufficient to remove it when it is observed, that the Scriptures, in our English translation, have been blessed of GOD, either by reading them in it, or by explaining them according to it, for the conversion, comfort, and edification of thousands and thousands. Bless GOD, therefore, and be thankful that GOD has, in his providence, raised up such men to translate the Bible into the mother tongue of every nation, and particularly in ours; and that he still continues to raise up such who are able to defend the translation made against erroneous persons and enemies of the truth."

5. *Dr. A. Geddes*, a learned Roman Catholic priest, who published a new translation of the Scriptures, and died in 1802, says: "The highest eulogiums have been made on the translation of James the First, both by our own writers and by foreigners. And, indeed, if accuracy, fidelity, and the strictest attention to the letter of the text, be supposed to constitute the qualities of an excellent version, this of all versions must in general be accounted the most excellent. Every sentence, every word, every syllable, every letter and point, seem to have been weighed with the nicest exactitude, and expressed either in the text or margin with the greatest precision. It was well remarked by Robertson, above a hundred years ago, that it may serve for a lexicon of the Hebrew language as well as for a translation."

6. *Dr. James Beattie*, a learned professor of the church of Scotland, and who died in 1803, says: "It is a striking beauty in our English Bible, that though the language is always elegant and nervous, and for the most part very harmonious, the words are all plain and common—no affectation of learned terms, or of words of Greek or Latin etymology."

7. *Mr. Thomas Scott*, a learned minister of the church of England, and the most eminent commentator on the Scriptures of any in that communion, died in 1821. He says: "It may be asked, How can unlearned persons know how our translations may be depended on, as in general faithful and correct? Let the inquirer remember that Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Independents, Baptists and Pædobaptists, Calvinists and Arminians, persons who maintain eager controversies with each other in various ways, all appeal to the same version, and in no matter of consequence object to it. This demonstrates that the translation, on the whole, is just. The same consideration proves the impossibility of the primitive Christians corrupting the Sacred Records."

8. *Dr. Adam Clarke*, a Methodist preacher, and one of the most learned men of the age, a commentator on the Bible, who died in 1832, says: "Those who have compared most of the European translations with the original, have not scrupled to say, that the English translation of the Bible, made under the direction of King James the First, is the most accurate and faithful upon the whole. Nor is this its only praise: the translators have seized the very spirit and soul of the original, and expressed this almost everywhere with pathos and energy. Besides, our translators have not only made a standard translation, but they have made their translation the standard of our language: the English tongue in their day was not equal to such a work; but GOD enabled them to stand as upon Mount Sinai, and *crane* up their country's language to the dignity of the original; so that, after the lapse of two hundred years, the English Bible is, with very few exceptions, the standard of the purity and excellence of the English tongue. The original, from which it was taken, is alone superior to the Bible translated by the authority of king James."

9 *Dr. Moses Stuart*, professor in the most celebrated theological college in the United States, and regarded as the most eminent orientalist in America, says, in contrasting the English version with the Latin Vulgate, "Ours is, on the whole, a most noble production for the time in which it was made. The divines of that day were very different Hebrew scholars from what most of their successors have been, in England or Scotland. With the exception of Bishop Lowth's classic work upon Isaiah, no other effort at translating, among the English divines, will compare either in respect of taste, judgment, or sound understanding of the Hebrew, with the Authorized Version."

DISSERTATION XVII.

FOREIGN TRANSLATIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Divine Revelation, being designed for all nations, required to be translated into all languages—Christianity spread first into Syria—The Scriptures translated first into Syriac—Latin Versions—Egyptian—Gothic—Sclavonic—French—Italian—Spanish—German—Missionary translations—British and Foreign Bible Society—number of languages into which the Bible has been printed—Dr. Carey and Dr. Morrison's labors—"Tenth Memoir of Translations into the Oriental Languages, by the Serampore Brethren"—Testimony of Rev. T. H. Horne—Divine Providence favors the translation of the Scriptures.

Divine Revelation was mercifully designed for all nations, and Divine Providence has raised up instruments from time to time for the purpose of propagating the saving knowledge of his grace, to bring, in the appointed season, all the families of the earth into the church of Christ. Translations of the Scriptures are, therefore, essentially necessary to the accomplishment of this design of God, and some brief notices of foreign translators and their labors cannot fail to interest inquiring Christians in Great Britain.

Christianity, having passed the boundaries of Judea, spread *first* into Syria, at Antioch, the capital of which, "the disciples were *first* called Christians," Acts xi. 36: it is natural, therefore, to suppose, that the Holy Scriptures would be *first* translated into that language: this appears probably to have been the case For although, as we have seen, various parts of the sacred books were translated for the Jews at Rome and in Italy, and then for the Christians in those parts, the same appears to have been done at a still more early period for the more numerous Jews and Christians in Syria.

1. The Peschito, or Literal Version, in the Syriac language, is believed to be the most ancient translation of the Holy Scriptures. The Old Testament is supposed to have been made in the *first* century, and the New Testament not later than the beginning of the *second* century. Several other translations of the Scriptures were, at different times, made into the Syriac.

2. Latin Versions.—These have already been noticed. *See* Dissertation XIV.

3. Egyptian Versions.—Egypt, bordering on Palestine, was early favored with translations of the Scriptures into its altered dialects subsequently to the making of the *Septuagint*: these translations were executed at an early period, the date of which cannot be fixed; but they existed in the *Coptic* dialect, the old Egyptian-Greek of Lower Egypt, in the *Sahidic*, or dialect of Upper Egypt, and in the *Basmuric*, or dialect of Middle Egypt.

4. Ethiopic Versions.—Ethiopia was soon visited with the light of the gospel, and an Ethiopic translation of the New Testament is believed to have

been made soon after the year 330, by Frumentius, a devoted missionary to Ethiopia.

5. Gothic Versions.—Ulphilas, a famous bishop of the Mœso-Goths inhabiting the banks of the Danube, translated the entire Scriptures about the year 370, for the use of those in that country who had believed on Christ

6. Sclavonic Version.—The Sclavonic, or Old Russian version of the Scriptures, is believed to have been made in the *ninth* century, including the whole or large portions of the Bible; it was the work of Cyril of Constantinople, and his brother Methodius, son of a Greek nobleman of Thessalonica, and a famous preacher of the gospel.

7. French Versions.—Peter Waldo, the celebrated teacher or founder of the Waldenses, is thought to have made the first translation of the Scriptures into French, about the year 1160, for the use of his followers. Raoul de Preste also translated parts of the Bible, about the year 1383, by command of Charles V., king of France. James le Fevre, of Estaples, published a translation of Paul's Epistles in 1512, in 1523 the whole of the New Testament, and in 1530 the entire Bible. The first Protestant French Bible was published in 1535 by Robert Peter Olivetan, aided by his relative the illustrious reformer John Calvin, who corrected it by the original Hebrew. New editions, improved by Calvin and others, and more recently several other versions of the Bible, especially of the New Testament, have been published in France and at Geneva.

8. Italian Versions.—Nicolao Malermi translated the Bible into Italian. which was published in 1471 at Venice. Antonio Bruccioli published at Venice in 1532 a new translation professedly from the Hebrew and Greek. A Protestant version of the New Testament was published in 1561, and in 1562 the entire Bible. These were, however, superseded by the more excellent version of Giovanni Diodati, divinity professor at Geneva, published in 1607 at Antwerp. Towards the close of the eighteenth century an Italian version was made by Antonia Martin, archbishop of Florence, sanctioned by Pope Pius VI.

9. Spanish Versions.—Alphonsus, king of Castile, had a translation of the sacred books made into his native dialect about the year 1280: the earliest of the Scriptures printed in the Spanish language was published in the year 1478. Several translations of the Old Testament were made by some learned Jews Cassiodore de Reyna published a translation of the Scriptures in Spanish in 1569. This was revised and improved by Cyprian de Valera, a learned Protestant, and published in 1602; and since that period, several other editions of the Bible have been published in Spanish

10. German Versions.—Printing was invented in Germany, and a translation of the Bible was printed in that language in the year 1466. Luther published his translation of the New Testament in 1522; and, after several other of the sacred books had been printed, the whole Bible was first published by him in 1530, which aided most powerfully the advancement of Christianity throughout Europe.

Divine Providence having laid open the Scriptures to the people in many nations in Europe by the Protestant Reformation, translations of the sacred books were made in almost every country by learned and devoted servants of Christ. The establishment of the Baptist Missionary Society in the year 1792, and that of the London Missionary Society in 1795, gave a new impulse to the cause of the Bible, as many of the missionaries immediately entered upon the work of translating the Scriptures. The British and Foreign Bible Society, formed in 1804, called forth the friends of the Scriptures, not only in England, but throughout Europe and America, and strengthened the hands of the missionary-translators

in their most noble labors, so that many languages previously unblessed with the oracles of God are now sanctified by versions of the Holy Scriptures.

The British and Foreign Bible Society reports that the Scriptures have been *reprinted*, the complete volume, or parts of it, directly or indirectly, by means of that institution, in

Languages	49
Languages or dialects in which the Scriptures had never been printed before the institution of this Society	75
New translations, commenced or completed . .	34
Total of translations . .	158

Missionary societies have contributed greatly to advance the knowledge of the Scriptures among the heathen, especially those already named. Among the worthy laborers in this glorious work, those whom God appears to have honored most highly are, the late Dr. Carey, a Baptist missionary at Serampore, in India, and the late Dr. Morrison of the Independent denomination, missionary of the London Society at Canton, in China. Their learned and successful labors in translating the Scriptures into Chinese, and the difficult languages of the East, were truly gigantic, exciting the astonishment and admiration of all the learned in Europe.

In the "Tenth Memoir respecting the Translations of the Sacred Scriptures into the Oriental Languages by the Serampore Brethren" in 1834, they say: "Thus, upon our observing that the entire Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments have been printed and circulated in *seven* languages, that is, in *six* Oriental tongues, besides the Chinese; that the New Testament has been printed in *twenty-three* languages more; that the Pentateuch and other parts of the Old Testament have been also printed and circulated in several of these languages into which the New Testament has been completed; and that portions of the Scriptures have been printed in *ten* others, or in all *forty* languages: in other words, upon our observing that more than *two hundred and twelve thousand* volumes of the Divine Word, in *forty* different languages, have thus issued from the Serampore press during the last thirty years, and that the original mover [Dr. Carey] is yet alive, and though feeble, in full possession of all his faculties; in all this we have certainly the very highest reason for united thanksgiving and praise to Him from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift."

Rev. T. H. Horne, in his notice of the "*Versions in the* Chinese, *and the Languages derived from or bearing affinities to it*," remarked in 1828: "In concluding the preceding notice of the versions executed principally by the learned Baptist missionaries and at their press, it is impossible not to recognise the hand of God, who has raised up and qualified them for the arduous task to which they have devoted their time, money, and labor; for though they have been nobly assisted by subscriptions and grants from Europe, yet it ought not to be forgotten that they have largely contributed to defray the expense of translating and printing out of those profits which their extraordinary acquirements have enabled them to realize. They have translated and printed the whole of the sacred Scriptures in *five* of the languages of India, the whole of the New Testament in *fifteen* others, in *six* other languages it is more than half printed, and in *ten* others considerable progress has been made in the work of translation

And these vast undertakings have been accomplished within the short space of thirty years, since the commencement of their first version (the New Testament) in Bengalee. When we consider the experience which they have gained, the number of learned natives whom they have trained up and accustomed to the work of translation, the assistance which is to be derived from our countrymen in various parts of India who are acquainted with any of its dialects, and the advantages now enjoyed for printing at a moderate expense, we may reasonably indulge the hope that, in the course of a few years more, the Word of Life will be extant in all the different languages and dialects of India."

Divine Providence most evidently appears in the appointment, labors, and successes of the Baptist missionaries in India; and as the spirit of the Bible and Missionary Societies is increasing and prevailing throughout the greater part of the Protestant nations in Europe and America, no doubt can rationally be entertained of the progressive and ultimate fulfilment of the prediction by Isaiah, "*The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the* LORD *as the waters cover the sea.*"

DISSERTATION XVIII.

DIVINE DISPENSATIONS REVEALED IN THE SCRIPTURES

GOD has made various revelations of his will to men—Divine dispensations of light and ceremonies have varied according to the circumstances of man and the sovereign grace of GOD—Paradisiacal Dispensation—Patriarchal—Levitical—Christian—Celestial—Necessity of preparation for heaven.

"GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his SON." Heb. i. 1, 2. These various communications from GOD to the prophets and the fathers of past ages, relate not to one state only of the church, but to several, differing in their peculiar circumstances and their sacred ordinances, but all bearing the evident impressions of the Divine character.

Christian writers, borrowing from the Holy Scriptures, have denominated them DISPENSATIONS, (1 Cor. ix. 17; Eph. iii. 2; Col. i. 25,) because in them GOD has been graciously pleased to grant special and appropriate manifestations of himself to his worshipping people, securing their happiness in the enjoyment of his favor, and inspiring them with the anticipations of eternal felicity in a world of bliss and glory. These several *Dispensations* it may be proper to notice here, to illustrate the value of Divine revelation and the importance of studying the Holy Scriptures.

1. PARADISIACAL DISPENSATION.—Adam and Eve were created in the image and likeness of GOD, in righteousness and true holiness, endowed with intelligence clearly to understand their duty according to the will of their CREATOR, and with loyal purity of heart to love and worship him as their bountiful GOD and FATHER. "The tree of knowledge of good and evil" was never to be touched by them; and their continued obedience was to be the evidence of their faith in the divine promise of his gracious protection and blessing; while "the tree of life" is, with great probability, believed to have been a kind of sacred pledge, of which they were to eat as a sign of their Maker's favor, like as Christians now partake of the LORD'S Supper, the significant memorial of the love of GOD in the redemption of CHRIST.

This Paradisiacal state was designed to make trial of the integrity and fidel-

ity of creatures formed holy and happy, but entirely dependant on GOD. Adam and Eve for a time, we are not informed how long, worshipped GOD, and held delightful converse with him; but they transgressed and fell into a state of guilt, misery, and mortality. In this condition, however, GOD mercifully revealed the purposes of his sovereign grace, and gave to the trembling culprits the promise of a Deliverer and SAVIOUR.

II. PATRIARCHAL DISPENSATION.—This form of religion was established for our first parents, by the institution of sacrifices before they were expelled from the garden of Eden. God's merciful promise was intended to lead their minds to the belief in a REDEEMER, and by sacrifices they were directed to seek the pardon of sin and the favor of GOD. Abel, therefore, offered an acceptable sacrifice, believing in "the LAMB OF GOD," thus "slain from the foundation of the world;" and thus we find Noah, Abraham, Job, Moses, and others of the patriarchs, worshipping GOD in the same appointed way. The existence, perfections, and providence of GOD as Creator of the world, the necessity of holy obedience to his law, the doctrine of a Mediator, and of a future life in a world of bliss, were the great principles of the patriarchal dispensation as illustrated, especially in the accounts of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Job, and Abraham, in the Scriptures.

III. LEVITICAL DISPENSATION.—This form of the Divine administration, established by Moses, with his written laws, is so called on account of the tribe of Levi being chosen and consecrated to the service of GOD, according to his especial command. Num. viii. 9, 15, 16, 19. Animal sacrifices for sin, offered daily in the worship of GOD, by the special priesthood of the family of Aaron, were appointed in an extensive system with a peculiar ritual, including a variety of instructive ceremonies, all intended to impress deeply on the minds of the Israelites correct ideas of the holiness of GOD, of his hatred of sin, of the necessity of personal sanctity, and of the means of obtaining his favor through the MESSIAH promised to Adam. These various ceremonies "could not take away sin; nor could they make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience:" they were designed as instructive types or "shadows of good things to come," at once foreshowing, and preparing for, the eventful and merciful advent of the expected REDEEMER.

IV. CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION.—Christianity is the perfect dispensation of the Divine mercy, in which "GOD manifested in the flesh" is exhibited as the only "Mediator between GOD and men. His gracious offices of "the apostle and high priest of our profession," lead us to behold in him, perfected and finished, all the typical institutions relating to sacrifice and priesthood, which are therefore abolished, as observed under former dispensations. Our Divine REDEEMER perfectly obeyed the law of GOD, and fulfilled all its righteousness, satisfied eternal justice for human transgression, "made reconciliation for iniquity," and "by one offering put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," dying "the just for the unjust," that he might "redeem" and "bring us to GOD." This last dispensation of the Divine mercy, by the simplicity of its ordinances, preaching, prayer, baptism, and the LORD'S supper, is adapted, as it is designed, for all nations, teaching and securing holiness in all its sincere subjects, and preparing them for immortality and eternal life in the celestial kingdom of GOD.

V. CELESTIAL DISPENSATION.—"Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel." A future state of immaculate holiness, divine intelligence, and perfect eternal happiness, is revealed in the Scriptures, and promised to all believers: a state in which the righteous shall be recalled from the dead, and raised to the kingdom of GOD, "fashioned like unto the glorified body of our

Lord Jesus Christ." In that future world of immortal joy and felicity the redeemed family of heaven will dwell with cherubim, seraphim, and all the celestial hosts, surrounding the eternal throne, deriving knowledge, holiness, and ineffable delight, from the infinite source of blessedness, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him. And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. xxii. 3–5.

Divine Revelation having been given with the ultimate design of preparing men for the enjoyment of future glory, it must be equally the duty and privilege of every one so to read and study it, as to be "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," realizing the consummate happiness of the Celestial Dispensation.

DISSERTATION XIX.

PERSONAL BENEFIT DERIVED FROM READING THE SCRIPTURES.

Divine truth the means of personal religion—God cleanses the heart by the knowledge of the truth—Nature of religion in angels, and especially in men—The gospel the instrument of regeneration, sanctification, and hope in the kingdom of God.

Divine Revelation is the manifest *instrument* of producing personal religion, by the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit. Personal religion must necessarily be happiness; consisting in the knowledge and love, the service and enjoyment, of the ever-blessed God. Such is the constant representation of it, and of its inestimable benefits, throughout the Holy Scriptures. And this production in our fallen race is declared to be the chief design of the oracles of God, thereby advancing the glory of their Divine Author.

God only can "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit;" and whether it be by the sacred Scriptures read, or heard, or recollected, or their blessed doctrines received only by report, as before the invention of printing or of writing they were embraced through tradition, or directly suggested to the mind, these truths of God, revealed to men, have ever been the essential means of religion. Universal pagan idolatry and impurity would illustrate the correctness of this position, by showing the need of such knowledge and influence to sanctify the mind; and its confirmation is found abundant in the declarations of the Scriptures, and in the heartfelt testimony of Christians.

Religion is a right disposition of the heart towards God our Creator, manifesting itself according to the various circumstances of its possessors. Angels are influenced by a religious disposition towards their Creator, whose glorious perfections they joyfully celebrate, and whose infinite excellences they ardently love, from the bright discoveries which they have received of them by Divine revelation. Innocence, integrity, holiness, and wisdom, prompt them to desire new communications, and to seek the perpetuation of their overflowing felicity in the immediate vision of God.

Religion in men, as fallen, guilty, and depraved creatures, is not natural to them: it is a state of mind produced by supernatural influence: it is the fruit of the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, recovering the soul to holiness

by the knowledge of JESUS CHRIST, and faith in him, as revealed in the gospel, the incarnate SON of GOD and our REDEEMER. Religion, therefore, in a sinner, as variously defined in the Holy Scriptures, is "repentance towards GOD, and faith toward our LORD JESUS CHRIST,"—"the life of GOD in the soul,"—"the kingdom of GOD within you." And this "kingdom of GOD is not meat and drink," consisting in mere ceremonial observances, but in "the knowledge of the truth," in "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST." Rom. xiv. 17 Religion produces a moral loveliness, with which it adorns its possessor as "the fruit of the SPIRIT," and this beauty consists of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance; against which there is no law." Gal. v. 22, 23.

Genuine personal religion leads the intelligent Christian, who has entered into the spirit of his principles, to acknowledge the striking appropriateness of the apostle's testimony, and to adopt it with gratitude to the GOD of his salvation. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with GOD through our LORD JESUS CHRIST: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of GOD. And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of GOD is shed abroad in our hearts by the HOLY GHOST, which is given unto us. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to GOD by the death of his SON, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we joy in GOD through our LORD JESUS CHRIST, by whom we have now received the atonement." Rom. v. 1, 2, 5, 10, 11.

Influenced by the purifying and consoling principles of the gospel, the true Christian proceeds in his course of sobriety, uprightness, and piety, discharging the duties of civil and social life, "adorning the doctrine of GOD his SAVIOUR." And though conscious of many infirmities, he is no longer the slave of passion; but "sanctified by the truth," feeling the propriety of the inspired testimony to the Christians of Rome—"Being now made free from sin, and become servants to GOD, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." vi. 22.

Religion qualifies the true believer for the enjoyment of temporal and worldly good, with thankfulness of heart to GOD the FATHER of mercies: and it equally prepares him to bow with resignation under the evils of the present life, with a cheerful hope of eternal glory. Is the Christian possessed of affluence, "the love of CHRIST constrains him," with enlarged benevolence of heart, to relieve the distressed, and to "weep with those that weep:" and while reflecting that "the whole world lieth in wickedness," 1 John v. 19; it engages him to rejoice in contributing liberally to bless those who are "perishing for lack of knowledge," with the saving ministry of the gospel of CHRIST. Hence have arisen all the Bible and Missionary societies to propagate through all nations "the glorious gospel of the blessed God."

"Man is born to trouble," being a mortal, fallen creature: sickness, pain, and calamity are, therefore, unavoidable in the present life. The promises of the Scriptures, however, inspire the soul with that "peace of GOD which passeth all understanding, and which keeps the heart and mind through CHRIST JESUS." Phil. iv. 6. And while even the pains of mortality are endured, the man of GOD is enabled, with inspiring resignation and hope, to say, "These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are working out for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2. Cor. iv. 17. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of GOD, which is in CHRIST JESUS our LORD." Rom. viii. 38, 39.

Inestimably precious as are the spiritual benefits which produce the state of mind here exhibited, chiefly in the language of inspiration, they are the common privileges of all true believers on JESUS CHRIST, and evidently the legitimate fruits of the SPIRIT of GOD, by means of a devout reading of the Holy Scriptures.

DISSERTATION XX.

NATIONAL BENEFITS FROM SCRIPTURAL KNOWLEDGE.

Divine Revelation regards man individually, and in society—The Scriptures reveal GOD—they establish law—they restrain crime—they enforce morality—they promote humanity—benevolent institutions—they provide for civilization—Influence of Christian missions.

DIVINE Revelation is designed for man as an *individual*, contemplating him in his extreme circumstances of ignorance, guilt, and mortality. It affords him all the relief that he needs in the lessons of infinite wisdom, exhibiting an almighty SAVIOUR, and the promise of life eternal in the kingdom of GOD. Divine Revelation regards man at the same time as a *social* being, and addresses him in all the various relations of domestic and civil life. This inestimable treasure, therefore, must be of supreme importance to communities, necessarily bringing and securing the most valuable national benefits, the mention of some of which will illustrate the preciousness of the Holy Scriptures.

1. THEY REVEAL GOD.—Communities cannot exist without the acknowledgment of a Deity; and those nations who have possessed no correct knowledge of "the only living and true GOD," have framed to themselves divinities of wood and stone, contrivances of crafty priests and legislators, as the means of preserving their power over the people. To an intelligent pious mind, what can be so truly humiliating as the idea of a nation of men, rational beings, as of Burmah, of Japan, or of China, prostrate in adoration before a block of wood or stone, fashioned with their own mortal hands? How degrading to men endowed with reason! How ineffably foolish, worse than brutish, in itself! How awfully criminal! What a grievous insult to the ALMIGHTY CREATOR!

Criminal absurdities such as these were once practised by our forefathers: but, thanks to the "Father of mercies," they have been banished by the brightness and glory of the Holy Scriptures; and the monstrous delusions of idolatry no longer degrade the privileged inhabitants of Great Britain, nor the favored people of America! Every good and ennobling institution arises from the acknowledgment of the glorious and self-existent CREATOR of all things, the only and eternal GOD.

2. THEY ESTABLISH LAW.—Man is a moral being: and society cannot exist without law. GOD is the only acknowledged source of moral obligation; and conformity to his law is the only rectitude. Despotism and atheism prevail, in various forms, with inseparable evils, in every country destitute of Divine revelation; and this inestimable blessing is the *instrumental cause* of all our social benefits and national advantages.

Dr. Dwight remarks: "The only object which the atheist knows in the moral world is man; and man lowered to the humblest possible level of intellectual existence. His origin, in the view of the atheist, is the same with that of the mushroom; and his character that of a mere animal. He is the subject of no moral government; unsusceptible of moral obligation; incapable therefore of virtue, excellence, and loveliness. How obvious is it that, on these views of man there can be erected no personal worth, enjoyment, or hope; no

common good, no sense of rectitude, and no efforts for the promotion of general happiness. This intolerable state of things would compel even atheists to unite in society, and establish government; but the rulers would feel no sense of rectitude, possess no virtue, and realize no moral obligation; convenience, of course, or in better words, passion and appetite would dictate all the conduct of these rulers. The nature of a government directed by passion and appetite we know imperfectly, by the histories of *Caligula*, *Nero*, and *Heliogabalus;* and more thoroughly, though still imperfectly, in those of *Danton*, *Marat*, and *Robespierre*, and their associates. Who could be willing to see such a tissue of madness, cruelty, misery, and horror, woven again? The subjects of such a government would, at the same time, be in the same manner, under the same doctrine. Their conduct would accordingly be an exact counterpart to that of their rulers. Appetite would change every man into a swine, and passion into a tiger. To deceive, to defraud, to betray, to maim, and to torture, would be the common employment, and the common sport. The dearest and most venerable relations would be violated by incestuous pollution; and children, such of them I mean as were not cast under a hedge, thrown into the sea, or dashed against the stones, would grow up without home, without parent, without a friend. The world would become one vast den; one immeasurable sty; and the swine and the wolf would be degraded by a comparison with its inhabitants."

Enormities such as are here described have existed in every country destitute of the light of Divine revelation. And by the testimony of the most unexceptionable witnesses, they still exist and prevail, in a greater or less degree, according to the measure of their destitution of the light of the Holy Scriptures.

3. THEY ENFORCE MORALITY.—Vice and immorality are lamented as fearfully prevailing in America. No intelligent observer of society among us can fail to observe this: but it may confidently be asked, whether they do not prevail at least equally in other countries? Morality certainly cannot be less in degree among us than in other nations; and, while alarming deficiency is still acknowledged, it may be a subject of pious exultation, that a standard of practical morality equally high does not exist in any other part of the world as it prevails among American Christians: this, however, "with one mind and one mouth" they unite in ascribing to the sanctifying influence of Divine Revelation.

4. THEY PROMOTE HUMANITY.—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is the imperative injunction of the law of GOD; and both the spirit and the letter of this benevolent precept are imbodied in the obligations of the gospel. Humanity in the highest degree is professed by Christians as inculcated by the gospel; and the institutions of America, and modern Europe especially, afford a striking illustration of its influences.

Dr. Valpy, in his "Sermon before the Royal Humane Society" of London, remarks: "To the influence of Christianity are to be attributed those asylums for the relief of the miserable, which humanity has consecrated as monuments of beneficence. Constantine was the first who built hospitals for the reception of the sick and wounded in the different provinces of the Roman empire. These establishments were multiplied in the *sixth*, *seventh*, and *eighth* centuries, in Italy, France, and Spain. They were afterwards so generally adopted, that according to Matthew Paris, not less than *nineteen thousand* charitable houses for leprosy alone existed in the Christian states in the *tenth* century. Rome contained *forty* hospitals for various charitable purposes. The number of similar establishments in Petersburg is almost incredible to those who recollect the sudden growth of that capital. In Paris, besides private establishments, there were before the revolution *forty-eight* public foundations for the relief of disease and indigence."

Great Britain and the United States, it is well known, stand pre-eminently distinguished through all their cities by such monuments of Christian sympathy; and all Europe, not to say all the world, is indebted to the missionary labors of that "prince of philanthropists," JOHN HOWARD: but he, and all who have shown their generous pity for suffering humanity, in providing hospitals, infirmaries, and asylums, to relieve the sick and indigent, the blind and dumb, the aged, the widow, and the fatherless, have professed their moving impulse to have been derived from the merciful dictates of the Holy Scriptures.

5. THEY PROVIDE FOR CIVILIZATION.—Civilization has ever been most effectually promoted by the Christian missionaries, diffusing the knowledge of Divine Revelation. Apostolic men went into all the world, and their labors regenerated society. Europe has been unspeakably benefited by this means. The various tribes of Germany relinquished human sacrifices; the Scythian clans ceased to use the skins of their enemies for clothes, and the Hungarians to devour the hearts of their captives in war, after the introduction of Christianity. The Scandinavians refrained from the common practice of suicide on their reception of the gospel, and their slaves and wives no longer devoted themselves voluntarily to death to honor the deceased in the paradise of Odin. Christianity imparted to the Danes, Norwegians, and Russians, just ideas of property, and led them to abandon their murderous system of piracy. The Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians, were recovered from the rudest barbarism, acquired the use of letters, and rose to civilization, as the fruit of their conversion to the gospel. Laws corresponding with the benevolent genius of the gospel were framed in the several nations; and every one who compares the codes of the Visigoths, Lombards, and Anglo-Saxons, with the laws of the emperors Theodosius, Justinian, and Charlemagne, sanctified greatly by the doctrine of CHRIST, sees abundant reason to admire the benevolent and civilizing influence of Christianity.

Modern missions to the heathen afford the most remarkable evidence on this subject; and the astonishing moral transformation of the inhabitants of South Africa, and of the numerous islands of the Southern ocean, has excited the admiration of every one, considering the subject as illustrating the civilizing power of Christianity.

"Britain" (says a late writer) "affords the finest and noblest example of the civilizing influence of Scriptural knowledge. Druidism, with its sanguinary rites, the religion of our forefathers, was succeeded by the impure mythology of Rome, and then by the cruel and war-inspiring worship of Odin, Wodin, and other divinities of the northern hordes. Christianity triumphed in the conversion of many of our ferocious Druid forefathers; sanctified many a convert from the filthy worship of Jupiter and his kindred divinities; and at length the Saxons ceased to immolate their miserable captives, being converted in a great degree from war as a business by the heavenly doctrine of CHRIST. This divine spirit of the gospel gradually prevailed in our favored country, abolishing one pernicious custom after another, until, in our privileged times, social blessings are enjoyed in a greater measure than in any other nation; and justice and humanity are known generally to influence the active classes of society as the genuine fruits of the gospel. And especially during the last half century, since our missionaries have carried the Bible with its regenerating blessings throughout the world, every country has participated in the precious benefits of Christianity."

DISSERTATION XXI.

STATE OF MIND REQUIRED IN READING THE SCRIPTURES.

Dispositions corresponding with the character of the Bible must be possessed by its readers—Reverence—Self-denial—Faith—Meekness—Obedience—Devotion—Our Saviour's Injunction—Dr. Owen's Recommendation.

Divine Revelation necessarily requires to be regarded by its students in a manner corresponding with its heavenly character. We must not look upon the pages of the sacred volume as if it were a common book, and however we may have been familiar with the Bible from our childhood, we must not read the Holy Scriptures as ordinary writings. Suitable dispositions of mind are indispensable in us, so as to be able to profit by the perusal of the oracles of God agreeable to their merciful and gracious design.

James the apostle gives inspired directions to hearers of the word, and they were evidently intended for the instruction of readers. "Lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness," says the sacred writer, "and *receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.* But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." Jam. i. 21, 22 The apostle Peter also exhorts: "Laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." 1 Pet. ii. 1–3.

There is great reason to fear that some read the Bible only for the purpose of entertainment, while others consult it principally as the most authentic and instructive record of ancient history, and some refer to it chiefly as affording the greatest variety of examples of the sublime and beautiful in literary composition. Those, however, who derive from it wisdom, holiness, and consolation, agreeably to its divine design, reflect upon its awful contents, in which themselves are personally interested, as heirs of an imperishable existence, desirous of immortality and eternal life.

1. *Reverence* is requisite in readers of the Scriptures. Nothing on earth possesses the sacredness of the Bible, as it is the volume of divine inspiration, the collection of the oracles of God. It is the sacred rule of our duty in this life, and the law by which we shall be judged at the tribunal of Christ. Certainly nothing can be more unbecoming than a trifling, careless, irreverent frame of mind in reading the Scriptures; and serious reverence should be cherished as an indispensable qualification for their profitable perusal. God calls for this temper by the word of his prophet: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." Isa. lxvi. 2. Superstition leads to an absurd veneration for the elegant appearance and rich binding of a sumptuous volume: but pious reverence regards the divine testimony and the heavenly doctrine of the writings: hence the Psalmist's language should be that of every Christian: "My heart standeth in awe of thy word." Psal. cxix. 161.

2. *Self-denial* is necessary in reading the Scriptures. Divine doctrine militates against all the sentiments natural to the corrupt propensities of the human heart: favorite opinions, therefore, and preconceived notions, must be given up, unless in accordance with the express testimony of Scripture; and in profitably reading the sacred word, every evil passion must be denied, and every unsanctified feeling must be disallowed. We must, as Peter directs, "lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speaking," which

James denounces as mental "filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness," in perusing with acceptableness to GOD or benefit to ourselves his blessed and holy word.

3. *Faith* is indispensable in the reader of the word of GOD. Having been fully satisfied of the truth and divine inspiration of the Scriptures, the mind of the reader should be prepared to believe their sacred declarations. An unbelieving, skeptical, or doubtful frame of mind, cannot be qualified to receive the testimony of GOD written in the law or in the gospel. The Scriptures, as given by inspiration, cannot be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness," to any one except to the sincere believer. Not with respect to prayer only, but also in relation to the Scriptures, it may be truly said, "He that cometh to GOD must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. xi. 6. "Let him ask," says James, and equally *let him read*, "in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the LORD." Jam. i. 6, 7. John expresses this sentiment most instructively: "He that believeth on the SON of GOD hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not GOD, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that GOD gave of his SON. And this is the record, that GOD hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his SON. He that hath the SON, hath life; and he that hath not the SON of GOD, hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the SON of GOD; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the SON of GOD." 1 John v. 10–13.

4. *Meekness* is essential to the reader of the Scriptures. Meekness, in relation to the oracles of GOD, is an humble and docile frame of mind, by which its possessor is "swift to hear" their divine declarations and ready to receive their infallible instructions. Hearers and readers are enjoined by the apostle James, therefore, to "receive with *meekness* the engrafted word." Jam. i. 6. "Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The *meek* will he guide in judgment, and the *meek* will he teach his way." Psal. xxv. 8, 9. MESSIAH was commissioned especially to contemplate the *meek:* hence, in prophecy, he says: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the *meek*." Isa. lxi. 1. Meekness, as a mental or moral quality, is allied to *reverence*, *self-denial*, and *faith*, and must, therefore, be most desirable and requisite in every profitable reader of the Word of GOD.

5. *Obedience* must result from reading the Scriptures. Every page of the sacred volume teaches the necessity of holy obedience to its precepts in the service of GOD. While divine grace is sovereign, free, and sanctifying, its influence on the heart secures practical godliness. Our LORD's declaration of his procedure, in dooming false professors to their awful place at the day of judgment, fearfully assures this doctrine: "Many will say to me in that day, LORD, LORD, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matt. vii. 21–23.

No man can, therefore, read the Scriptures to his everlasting profit, unless his soul is transformed to holiness, and his life conformed to the will of GOD. "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers," or readers, "only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer," or reader, "of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein,

he being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." Jam. i. 22–25. No man indeed can clearly understand the Scriptures, except his heart is engaged in the way of holy obedience: hence the assurance of our LORD,—"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of GOD." John vii. 17.

6. *Devotion* must pervade the mind of the profitable reader of the Scriptures. Human learning is exceedingly valuable to a student of the sacred volume: but however profound, accurate, and extensive that may be, it is not of itself sufficient to enable any one savingly to understand the mind and doctrine of GOD in the Scriptures. Intellectual capacity and cultivation need the sanctification of the Spirit of GOD; a devout mind must be possessed; the heart must be right in the sight of GOD. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of GOD: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1. Cor. ii. 14.

Our SAVIOUR directed his disciples to seek this influence: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly FATHER give the HOLY SPIRIT to them that ask him!" Luke xi. 13. The state of mind required is beautifully illustrated in many parts of the Psalms, particularly the *nineteenth* and the *hundred and nineteenth:* these should be studied by every Christian.

Dr. Owen recommends "earnest prayer for the guidance, direction, assistance, and illumination of the HOLY SPIRIT, to enable us to find out, discern, and understand the deep things of GOD. Many of the things of GOD in the Scriptures are very deep, so that they cannot be discovered but by the help of the Spirit of GOD. And for this purpose we are directed to pray by the example of the apostle, Eph. i. 16–20; iii. 10–19; Col. ii. 2. This is the great and principal rule which is to be given to those who would find out the mind of GOD in the Scripture. Let them be earnest, diligent, constant, fervent in their supplications and prayers, that GOD, according to his promise, would graciously send his HOLY SPIRIT to guide, lead, instruct, and teach them; to open their understandings that they may understand the Scriptures, as our LORD did for his disciples. And these prayers ought to be, 1. A constant part of our daily supplication; 2. Brief elevations of soul unto GOD, whenever occasionally or statedly we read the word of GOD; 3. At solemn or appointed seasons."

DISSERTATION XXII.

EVANGELICAL DIRECTIONS FOR READING THE SCRIPTURES.

In searching the Scriptures we need directions—read them habitually—read the whole of each book—consider the design of each book—Observe the connexion between the Old and New Testaments—Regard the Scriptures as a harmonious whole—Remarks of the Rev. T. H. Horne—Mark the testimony of the prophets to CHRIST—Make the Bible its own interpreter—Bishop Horsley's testimony—Attain correct views of the Scripture doctrine of justification—of regeneration—of sanctification—Notice the various significations of the term covenant—and law—Many things in the Old Testament typical of CHRIST.

INSPIRED prophets we find "searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of CHRIST which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of CHRIST, and the glory that should follow." 1 Pet. i. 11. If they who were endowed with heavenly influence labored to understand the will of GOD, which they were to deliver for the instruction of the world, it might be expected that our LORD would exhort his hearers to "search the Scriptures,"

John v. 39: for this must be both the duty and the privilege of those who possess the volume of Divine Revelation.

"Directions," therefore, in prosecuting so important a duty must be necessary; and those recommended by learned, wise, and experienced Christians, cannot fail to be valuable, as they have been found agreeable to the mind of the Spirit.

1. READ THE SCRIPTURES HABITUALLY.—Divine truth thus describes the man of GOD: "His delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Psal. i. 2. Hence the apostle exhorts: "Let the word of CHRIST dwell in you richly in all wisdom." Col. iii. 16. How much at a time, and how frequently, any one should read the Scriptures, must depend, however, on circumstances. Eminent Christians of great leisure have been known to read many chapters daily: as Thomas Gouge, a distinguished nonconformist minister, read *fifteen* chapters daily. Many read three chapters daily, so as to peruse the whole of the Bible in a year. But neither of these customs can be obligatory on every one, nor would they be practicable with all Christians; yet most could read a chapter in the morning and another in the evening. Many pious merchants, and men of the greatest business, and laborers, are known to accustom themselves to take a verse of Scripture as a text for reference or meditation during the day, with the happiest effect: but whether much or little is read daily, every believer on CHRIST must, for the peace, sanctification, and comfort of his soul, habitually read or meditate upon the testimony of GOD in the Scriptures.

2. READ THE WHOLE OF EACH BOOK OF SCRIPTURE.—Single verses, and especially particular chapters of the sacred word, contain, in many instances, a remarkable fulness of divine doctrine; short portions, therefore, are frequently productive of the best effects on pious minds. Meditation on such passages cannot be too strongly recommended; but no intelligent Christian can be satisfied with such a mode of studying the Scriptures: his object must be to gain a comprehensive view of the design of each of the sacred writers; and this cannot be accomplished without carefully reading the whole of the several books. It cannot be wise merely "to dip into a book," or to read it irregularly, if its contents are of high importance; but much less so is such a practice to be commended with regard to the oracles of GOD. Who could fully understand the sacred histories in the books of Genesis and the Acts, or the expositions of divine doctrine in the Epistles to the Romans and Hebrews, by occasional, indiscriminate, and only partial reading? For the purpose of realizing their grand design in learning the mind of GOD, for edification, consolation, and sanctification, these and all the other books of the Scriptures should be read through by Christians.

3. CONSIDER THE DESIGN OF EACH BOOK OF SCRIPTURE.—However beautiful or instructive particular parts of the sacred books may be, the design of the whole must be considered, to perceive fully the importance of each part. Genesis, for example, should be read through, as designed to give a comprehensive view of the history of creation, illustrated by the most edifying records of the Divine providence. Each of the Gospels, or the Acts of the Apostles, contains a complete but brief history; the former of the ministry of JESUS CHRIST, designed to show the foundation of Christianity, the latter to show the first establishment of Christian churches: without their being read through, therefore, with their design considered, no one will clearly perceive their unspeakable value. The Epistles to the Romans and Hebrews, in particular, require to be read as a whole: their design is the establishment of believers in the doctrines of CHRIST; but the manner of presenting these truths to believers, and the

mode of illustrating them, are different in each. That to the Romans clearly and fully unfolds the gospel in all its freeness and glory, as the Divine remedy for the regeneration and salvation of a guilty world: that to the Hebrews teaches the same system of redemption and grace, but shows that all the blessings and glories of the mediation of CHRIST had been taught and prefigured by the priesthood, the sacrifices, and the various Levitical institutions; even by the sacrifices of the patriarchs from the foundation of the world. If other of the sacred books are less comprehensive or momentous in their subjects, they require to be read through, as their design must be interesting to every Christian.

4. OBSERVE THE CONNEXION BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.—Any reader of the Scriptures for the first time would immediately perceive, on commencing the New Testament, that he needed another and a previous part to complete the series of the books of Divine revelation. The genealogies, the prophecies, the laws, and the usages, referred to throughout the New Testament, would require a commentary, such as is contained in the Old Testament; and every reader of the latter volume would soon perceive, that another body of writings was needed to record the fulfilment of its long-continued and varied series of prophecies; but all that is thus desirable is amply and instructively found in the several books of the New Testament. Readers of the Scriptures therefore, find that they illustrate each other, and that both parts are indispensably necessary to the complete edification of every Christian.

5. REGARD THE SCRIPTURES AS A HARMONIOUS WHOLE.—However numerous the sacred writers might be, and however remote in time and place they might live, as they were divinely inspired, and truth being the basis of their communications, they must have had a complete unity of design, and there must be a perfect harmony in their communications. Dr. Gill justly remarks: "The writers make it plainly appear that they wrote not of themselves, but as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. For though they were men that lived in different ages of the world, and in different parts of it, and were of different conditions and circumstances, yet they are all of the same sentiment; they speak and write of the same things, deliver out the same doctrines and truths, enjoin the same moral duties of religion, and the same positive precepts, according to the different dispensations under which they wrote, and relate the same historical facts There are no contradictions to one another, no jar nor discord between them, but all uniform and of a piece. What *seeming* contradictions may be observed are easily reconciled, with a little care and study."

Mr. Horne further remarks: "The Scriptures are not a book compiled by a single author, nor by many hands acting in confederacy in the same age: but most of the writers lived at very different times, and in distant places, through the long space of about *sixteen hundred* years; so that there could be no confederacy or collusion; and yet their relations agree with and mutually support each other. Not only human historians, but philosophers even of the same school, disagree concerning their tenets; whereas the two Testaments, like the two cherubs, (Exod. xxv. 20,) look steadfastly towards each other, and towards the mercy-seat which they encompass. The holy writers, men of different education, faculties, and occupation—prophets, evangelists, apostles—notwithstanding the diversity of time and place, the variety of matter, consisting of mysteries of Providence, as well as of faith, yet all concur uniformly in carrying on one consistent plan of supernatural doctrines; all constantly propose the same invariable truth, flowing through different channels. The same remarks apply to the New Testament. The leading doctrines of Christianity harmonize together: one writer may enlarge upon and explain what another has said, may add to his account, and carry it further; but he *never* contradicts him. It is self-evident

that the corruption of human nature—that our reconciliation to GOD by the atonement of CHRIST, and the restoration of our primitive dignity by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, are all parts of one whole, united in close dependance and mutual congruity. The same essential agreement, and the same mutual dependance of one upon another, obtain also among the *practical precepts* of Christianity."

6. MARK THE TESTIMONY OF THE PROPHETS TO CHRIST.—Divine revelation contains necessarily a great variety of instructions relating to many things in the several dispensations of GOD towards our world: every passage therefore in the Scriptures cannot directly apply to CHRIST. But the doctrinal part of Divine revelation relates to the perfections and character of GOD as they concern mankind, and to the person, offices, redemption, and grace of CHRIST, by which GOD is glorified in the salvation of sinners, through the obedience and death of JESUS as the Mediator. These things were, therefore, from the beginning, the chief subjects of prophecy; and hence one of the heavenly inhabitants declared to John, "The testimony of JESUS is the spirit of prophecy." Rev. xix. 10. Hence also Peter declared, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins." Acts x. 43. Thus also our LORD himself taught his disciples: "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures." Luke xxiv. 27, 44, 45.

7. MAKE THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER.—Many unlearned and plain Christians read scarcely any other religious book besides the Bible; and being familiar with its divine contents, *by comparing one part with another*, they attain a surprising measure of Scriptural knowledge. As to the beneficial results of this practice, Bishop Horsley declares: "It were to be wished that no Bible were printed without *references*. Particular diligence should be used in comparing the parallel texts of the Old and New Testaments. It is incredible to any one who has not made the experiment, what a proficiency may be made in that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation, by studying the Scriptures in this manner, *without any other commentary or exposition than what the different parts of the sacred volume mutually furnish for each other*. I will not scruple to assert, that the most illiterate Christian, if he can but read his English Bible, and will take the pains to read it in this manner, will not only attain all that practical knowledge which is necessary to his salvation, but, by GOD's blessing, he will become learned in every thing relating to his religion, in such a degree that he will not be liable to be misled, either by the refined arguments or false assertions of those who endeavor to ingraft their own opinions upon the oracles of GOD. He may safely be ignorant of all philosophy, except what is learned from the sacred books; which, indeed, contain the highest philosophy, adapted to the lowest apprehensions. He may safely remain ignorant of all history, except so much of the history of the first ages of the Jewish and Christian church as is to be gathered from the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments. Let him study these in the manner I recommend; and let him never cease to pray for the illumination of that Spirit by which these books were dictated; and the whole history of abstruse philosophy and recondite history shall furnish no argument with which the perverse will of man shall be able to shake this learned Christian's faith."

8. ATTAIN CORRECT VIEWS OF THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION.—To justify a person is to clear him from all charge of guilt, and to treat him as righteous. See Exod. xxiii. 7; Isa. v. 23. Justification is the clearing of a person from the charge of guilt, that he may be regarded and treated as righteous: but man, as a sinner, cannot be justified before GOD, except in the manner revealed for our reception by faith in the gospel,—on account of the righteousness and atonement of CHRIST. This has been regarded as the grand doctrine of Protestantism, the chief article of Christianity. See Rom. iii. 19, 26; v. 1, 21. Hence the church of England, in the article on justification, declares—"We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, by faith, and not for our own works and deservings." Art. xi. The church of Scotland, and the great body of the Dissenters, hold the same doctrine, which is thus expressed in the Assembly's Catechism:—"Justification is an act of GOD's free grace; wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of CHRIST imputed to us, and received by faith alone."

9. OBTAIN SCRIPTURAL VIEWS OF REGENERATION AND SANCTIFICATION.—*Regeneration*, or "being born again," "born of the Spirit," "born of GOD," is the recovery of the soul of man from his fallen condition of alienation from GOD and death in sin, to a new life of holiness, by the influences of the Holy Spirit. Thus a sinful mortal is mercifully brought into the kingdom of GOD; and hence, as the apostle declares, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through JESUS CHRIST our Saviour." Tit. iii. 5, 6.

Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit continued upon the minds of believers, by means of the doctrine of the Scriptures, after their regeneration, qualifying them for obedience in holiness on earth, and to inherit life everlasting. See Rom. vi. 22; John xvii. 17; 1 Pet. i. 2, 22. These great principles governing the mind, the reader will be prepared for the correct understanding of most of the doctrinal parts of the Holy Scriptures.

10. NOTICE THE VARIOUS APPLICATION OF THE TERM COVENANT.—This word properly means a mutual agreement between two parties for the performance of certain conditions; as those between Abraham and Abimelech, Gen. xxi. 27–32; and between Isaac and Abimelech, xxvi. 28. Generally, however, it is applied to a solemn promise of GOD to give certain blessings to his believing people. Besides the *covenant of obedience with Adam*, the common father and head of all mankind, called by divines the *covenant of works*, the token of which was *the tree of life*, and the violation of which brought mortality and misery into the world, (Gen. ii. 9–17; iii. 22–24; Rom. v. 12–14,) the following are mentioned as remarkable in the Scriptures:—

(1.) *The Covenant of Safety with Noah:* this secured the Divine preservation of mankind and the earth, of which the rainbow was made the token of assurance. Gen. viii. 15, 22; ix. 9, 17.

(2.) *The Covenant of Property with Abraham:* this was ratified by the seal of circumcision, and secured to his descendants the possession of the land of Canaan. Gen. xvii. 1–13; Psal. cv. 8–11.

(3.) *The Covenant of Inheritance with Israel:* this was made at Sinai, with the whole nation of Israel, in confirmation of the covenant with Abraham. Exod. xix. 1–8; Heb. viii. 6–9.

(4.) *The Covenant of Royalty with David:* this secured the throne of Israel in the family of David, so long as his children should serve GOD. 2 Sam. vii.; Psal. lxxxix. 19–35.

(5) *The everlasting Covenant with Christ*, called also the *New Covenant*. Heb. viii. 8; xiii. 20. CHRIST is the Surety and the Mediator of this covenant, which the apostle contrasted with that established with Israel by Moses:—"JESUS, the SON of GOD—made with an oath—a high-priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek—is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the LORD; I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a GOD, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Heb. viii. 6–12.

11. POSSESS RIGHT IDEAS OF THE APPLICATION OF THE TERM LAW.—Besides the ordinary use of this word throughout the Scriptures, it is applied, in the New Testament, to the moral law of ten commandments; and also, in its popular signification among the Jews, to the Levitical ceremonies: the law, in the latter sense, is abolished, and its obligations are not binding upon Christians, Acts xv. 5, 10, 24; Rom. vii. 4: but the moral law is still obligatory, summed up by our Saviour thus: "Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind;" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Matt. xxii. 37–39. This rule of holiness cannot, from the nature of GOD, be abolished: it is in force, as the moral directory and standard of duty, to all intelligent creatures, as well as upon believers on CHRIST.

12. REMARK THAT MANY THINGS UNDER FORMER DISPENSATIONS WERE TYPICAL OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH.—Types, figures, or shadowy representations, abounded in the Levitical institutions: they were "an example and shadow of heavenly things," Heb. viii. 5: "a figure for the time then present," ix. 9: "a shadow of good things to come," x. 1: of these types the Epistle to the Hebrews is an inspired commentary. Many *persons* were typical of CHRIST, especially Adam, as a public head of mankind, Rom. v. 12, 19; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22: Melchisedek as a priest, Heb. vi. 20; vii. 1, 15, 21: Moses as a lawgiver, Deut. xviii. 15; Heb. iii. 2, 6: David as a king, Psal. ii.; Hos. iii. 5; Luke i. 69. Certain *places* were typical, as Paradise, Canaan, the cities of refuge, and Jerusalem; *things* were typical, as the manna, the tabernacle, and the temple of Solomon; *institutions* were typical, as sacrifices, circumcision, and the passover; but caution is required in the interpretation of the types of Scripture. Bishop Marsh gives the following rule of applying this doctrine:—"Whatever persons or things recorded in the Old Testament, were expressly declared by CHRIST or his apostles to have been designed as prefigurations of persons or things relating to the New Testament, such persons or things, so recorded in the former, are types of persons or things with which they are compared in the latter." This rule will be found instructively applicable, especially in reference to the Epistle to the Hebrews.

DISSERTATION XXIII.

LITERARY DIRECTIONS TO READERS OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Read the original languages, if possible, especially the Greek of the New Testament—and other translations—Notice peculiarities in the English Bible, as—the words in Italics, supplied by our translators—LORD in capitals—Scripture geography—History in connexion with the Scriptures—Chronology of Scripture—Hebrew and Jewish festivals—Hebrew and Jewish offices—The manners of ancient nations—Figurative style of the Scriptures.

DIVINE Revelation in the Holy Scriptures being known to most persons only by translations, there must of necessity be some disadvantages, in their case, attending the study of the Word of GOD. Besides the directions that are to be regarded as *religious*, therefore, there are others which may be esteemed as *literary:* these also, as far as possible, should be observed. The following have been found of great practical utility:—

1. READ THE SCRIPTURES, IF POSSIBLE, IN THEIR ORIGINAL LANGUAGES, ESPECIALLY THE NEW TESTAMENT.—Those who have been educated for the Christian ministry, and pious persons who have enjoyed the advantages of a learned education, know how to appreciate the privilege of such a qualification; for, however faithful and accurate any translation of a book may be, it cannot give the force, and beauty, and perfect representation of the original, especially of the inspired writings.

Luther, in relation to the sacred language of the Old Testament, declared, "*I would not be without what knowledge I have of Hebrew for untold sums of gold!*" And the same expressions of sentiment would find an immediate echo from every pious reader of the New Testament in Greek, in relation to that language. Many, however, who have not enjoyed the advantages of a college or grammar-school, have made, notwithstanding, respectable advances in the knowledge of the sacred languages; and some have become eminently learned. Young men of piety may see such examples exhibited in Christian biographies; particularly in that of the late Dr. Adam Clarke, and in that of the late extraordinary oriental scholar, Mr. W. Greenfield, editor of the "Comprehensive Bible," and translator of the incomparable "Hebrew New Testament."

2. READ THE SCRIPTURES, ACCORDING TO ABILITY, IN OTHER TRANSLATIONS.—Dr. J. P. Smith's testimony on this subject will not fail to have weight, both with the learned, and with those who aspire to be scholars; that distinguished divine says: "I assure my serious readers, that in all their Scripture researches, they will obtain eminent elucidation and satisfaction by the *comparison of translations*, whether the ancient versions, or those made at the period of the Reformation, or those which have been produced by the learning and piety of more recent biblical scholars. Even translations which may, as a whole, be inferior, will often exhibit instances of successful expression, in single words and clauses, most remarkably bringing out the beauty and genuine force of the original."

3. NOTICE VARIOUS PECULIARITIES IN THE ENGLISH BIBLE.—Those words which are found printed in *Italics* were added to the text by the translators, under the idea of their being required to complete the sense of the writers: they do this in many cases, without doubt, but in others they make it obscure. Archbishop Secker is said to have dashed out many thousands of these in his study Bible, generally to the improvement of the sense of the text.

"LORD," as found in capitals in the Old Testament, is a translation of the

Hebrew word Jehovah, denoting the self-existent and eternal Being, the universal CREATOR: "lord," in small letters, means *ruler* or *sustainer:* an example of the use of both of these is found in the language of David. Psal. cx. 1; Matt. xxii. 43, 45.

"Marginal readings," as found in the larger Bibles, require to be noticed: they are the literal translations of the Hebrew and Greek words, for which others have been given in the text by the translators. Many of these "readings," especially of the proper names, are very important, on account of their signification: and others are equally deserving of notice. As an example, observe the difficult text of 1 Cor. xi. 29, by which many sincere Christians have been distressed: the original word, here rendered *damnation*, is in verse 34 translated *condemnation:* but the marginal reading is *judgment*, as the proper signification of the Greek.

4. BE FAMILIAR WITH THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE SCRIPTURES.—Every reader of the Bible should have the relative situation of every principal country around Canaan familiarly present to his mind. See Dissertation XXVI.

5. STUDY HISTORY, ESPECIALLY THAT IN THE SCRIPTURES.—Holy Scripture contains the most ancient and authentic history of the world; and the greater part of the sacred books consists of instruction given in this form. Besides which, the references to history through all the prophetical, doctrinal, and devotional books, are innumerable: this is remarkable even in the book of Psalms; every reader, therefore, desirous of understanding them for edification, ought to be familiar with the record of events in the Scripture history. Divine Providence, in the rise and fall of states and empires and the changes of government among the several nations referred to by the sacred writers, requires the reader to possess some additional information. The ancient history of the Jews, their condition after the reformation by Nehemiah and Malachi, under the Herodian princes, and under the Romans, should be known, with the history of the first Roman emperors, and of their provinces in Asia; for the purpose of illustrating many passages in the New Testament. Add to which, general history, even in relation to more recent events, and to the present state of the world, is exceedingly valuable, as affording the most edifying confirmation of the truth of Scripture, by the fulfilment of the Divine predictions in the extensive enlargement of the church of CHRIST.

6. ACQUIRE GENERAL INFORMATION CONCERNING SCRIPTURE CHRONOLOGY.—Learned men are not perfectly agreed as to their chronological computation of the events recorded in the Scriptures. Without entering, however, upon the points of difference, it may be remarked that, for ordinary purposes, it will be sufficient to use the system of Archbishop Usher; especially as that has been adopted for the Authorized Version of the Bible. The following principal epochs should be impressed upon the memory of every intelligent reader of the Scriptures:—

Creation of the world	B. C. 4000	years.
Deluge	" 2348	"
Calling of Abraham	" 1921	"
Exodus of Israel from Egypt	" 1491	"
Dedication of Solomon's Temple	" 1012	"
Destruction of the kingdom of Israel	" 721	"
Destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians	" 588	"
Close of the Old Testament History	" 400	"
Close of the New Testament History	A. D. 100	"

7. BE WELL INFORMED AS TO THE HEBREW AND JEWISH TIMES AND SEASONS. See Dissertation XXVII.

8. Obtain correct ideas of the Hebrew and Jewish offices.—See Dissertation XXVIII.

9. Seek acquaintance with the manners of ancient nations.—"Oriental customs," national, domestic, and personal, especially among the ancients, differed very greatly in many things from those of western Europe: these it will be desirable to understand and consider, on account of numerous allusions to such peculiarities being found in the Scriptures. The greatest patriarchs, even Abraham and Job, though princes, were chiefly engaged in the occupations of pastoral life, "living in tabernacles," or tents, as many of the modern princes of Arabia. And the Israelites, when settled in the towns of Canaan, were not a commercial people; trade, especially with foreigners, was carried on chiefly by the Phenicians of Tyre. Ezek. xxvii. Their manners, therefore, were peculiar in many respects in the comparatively infantile state of the world. Agriculture and manufactures were very different from those among us, and also the buildings of the Israelites: their houses had generally flat roofs, on which the occupants could walk, or even sleep, and to which the pious might retire for the purpose of devotion. Acts x. 9. Their clothing or outer garments consisted of loose flowing robes; the upper one being a large cloak or mantle, often serving as a blanket at night: their bottles were made of the skins of sheep or goats: and their books of skins of parchment, rolled up and fastened with bandages or clasps. The writings of travellers in Eastern countries are highly valuable in this respect; as they have afforded most edifying illustrations of many beautiful passages of the Scriptures.

10. Consider the figurative style of the sacred writers.—See Dissertation XXV.

DISSERTATION XXIV.

DIVISION OF THE SCRIPTURES INTO CHAPTERS AND VERSES.

Originally no division of chapters or verses—Two parts of the Bible—Jewish division of the Old Testament—*Law, Prophets, Holy Writings*—Public reading required punctuation—Divisions of the Psalms—Sections of the Law—of the Prophets—Smaller divisions—Sections or chapters of the New Testament for Sabbath lessons—Cardinal Hugo divided the present chapters, and numbered some verses—Vatablus improved the verses of the Old Testament—R. Stephens divided the New Testament into verses—These adopted for the English Bible—Use of the verses—Dissection of the Old and New Testaments.

Readers of the Scriptures should know that the divisions of the sacred books into chapters and verses were human inventions, adopted for the convenience of reading and reference, and not an arrangement made by the Divine inspiration. This consideration may relieve the mind from a measure of difficulty in relation to some of the divisions, which interrupt the sense and obscure the meaning of the writer; and a few historical notices respecting them, in addition to what has already been given, will aid the reader in the intelligent perusal of the Scriptures.

The volume of Divine Revelation is contained in two collections of inspired writings, distinguished by the appropriate titles, "The Old Testament" and "The New Testament." The former contains the record of the series of Divine dispensations to mankind, especially to the Hebrews, both the Israelites and Jews, previously to the advent of the Messiah; and the latter comprises the records of the evangelists and apostles of Christ, concerning the ministry of our Redeemer, and the labors of his commissioned servants, in planting Christian churches, and establishing the kingdom of their Lord and Saviour

Both parts of the sacred volume include *sixty-six* distinct books: *thirty-nine* in the Old Testament, and *twenty-seven* in the New Testament. Those in the former were classed by the ancient Jews in *three* divisions: I. The Law; II. The Prophets; III. The Holy Writings—in Hebrew *Kethubim*, in Greek *Hagiographa*.

"The Law" comprised the five books of Moses, and was called, as before remarked, the *Pentateuch:* "the prophets" comprehended the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and the Kings, which were called "*the Former Prophets;*" and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophetic books, from Hosea to Malachi, which were denominated "*the Latter Prophets.*" "The Holy Writings" included the books of Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Solomon's Song, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Chronicles. Slight differences from this plan, but not of any importance, were made by some of the learned Jews in their numbering and arrangement of the sacred books of the Old Testament.

Originally, and for a long period, the sacred writings had no marks of punctuation. As was the case in all profane writings, the words were not separated from each other, but letter followed letter, as if every line were only a single word; a reader had, therefore, extreme difficulty; as he was obliged, mentally, to separate and combine the letters, so as to form the words, before he could perceive the sense of the writer; and this was the case so late as the fourth century with the writings of the New Testament.

Public reading rendered some punctuation indispensable: and hence many believe, that it was commenced by Ezra, and greatly extended by the Jewish *Masorites*, or writers of tradition, to the fourth or fifth century; whose notes and criticisms relate to the books, verses, words, letters, vowel-points, and accents, of the Old Testament.

The book of Psalms was always divided into its distinct compositions; as is evident from its several pieces, and from reference found in the New Testament; but originally no divisions are believed to have existed in any other of the sacred books.

The Law or Pentateuch was divided into *fifty-four Parashioth* or sections; and these into smaller sections, called *Sederim* or orders, probably by Ezra, to be read through in the synagogues in a year, which, when intercalated, contained as many Sabbaths. King Antiochus having forbidden the Jews to read the law, on pain of death, they substituted fifty-four sections, into which they divided the Prophets, calling these lessons *Haptoroth*, intimating their being open, or not interdicted; but independence having been gained by the Maccabees, and their religious worship restored, both classes of lessons were afterwards read in the synagogues; that from the law as a first lesson, and then that from the prophets. Hence arose the custom of reading the law and the prophets referred to in the New Testament. Acts xiii. 15, 27; Luke iv. 16, 17. This edifying practice suggested the custom of the primitive Christians, to read a lesson every Sabbath out of the Old and the New Testament.

These sectional portions of the Jewish Scriptures were further divided into *pesookim*, sentences or verses; which, if not invented by Ezra, were used at an early period after the Babylonish captivity, when the Hebrew ceased to be the mother-tongue of the Jews, requiring the reader to become an interpreter of the Scriptures, as stated by Nehemiah, viii. 8.

These Hebrew divisions seem to have suggested the *titloi*—titles, and *kephalaia*—heads or chapters, into which the Greek New Testament was divided by some of the Christian doctors. These in the Latin Testament were called *breves* and *capitula;* and the table of contents prefixed to the copies of the New

Testament *breviarium*. Different doctors made these divisions according to their own several judgments; so that, not being established by any ecclesiasti cal authority, no uniformity existed. "The most ancient, and it appears the most approved, of these divisions," says Mr. T. H. Horne, "was that of Tatian (A. D. 172), in his Harmony of the Gospels, for the *titloi* or *breves;* and that of Ammonius, a learned Christian of Alexandria, in the third century, in his Harmony of the Gospels, for the *kephalaia* or *capitula*. From him they were termed *Ammonian Sections*. As these divisions were subsequently adopted, and the use of them was recommended, by Eusebius, the celebrated ecclesiastical historian, they are frequently called by his name." According to this division, Matthew contains 68 breves, and 355 capitula; Mark, 48 breves, and 234 ca pitula; Luke, 83 breves, and 342 capitula; and John, 18 breves, and 231 capitula. All the evangelists together form 216 breves, and 1126 capitula. The division of the Acts of the Apostles, and of the Catholic Epistles, was made by Euthalius, bishop of Sulea, in Egypt, in the fifth century; and he published an edition of Paul's Epistles, which had been so divided by some unknown person in the fourth century.

Euthalius, while a deacon of the church at Alexandria, in the middle of the fifth century, published an edition of the four Gospels; and afterwards, at Sulea, the Acts and all the Epistles, which he divided into *stichoi* or verses; which were lines, so to regulate the sense, that each might terminate where the pause was to be made in reading. The following is an example, copied from an ancient Greek manuscript, but given in English. Tit. ii. 2, 3.

THAT THE AGED MEN BE SOBER
GRAVE
TEMPERATE
SOUND IN FAITH
IN LOVE
THE AGED WOMEN LIKEWISE
IN BEHAVIOR AS BECOMETH HOLINESS
NOT FALSE ACCUSERS
NOT GIVEN TO MUCH WINE
TEACHERS OF GOOD THINGS

The New Testament contained 18,612 *stichoi:* but this mode of writing made a book too bulky; and a point was therefore placed at the end of each stichus, for the purpose of continuing the writing in the same line; and this led to the use of our modern points. Jerome is believed to have commenced punctuation, in the fourth century, introducing the *comma* and the *colon*.

Cardinal Hugo de Sancto Caro, a French Dominican friar, who flourished about the middle of the *thirteenth* century, superseded *breves* and *capitula*, by making our present division into chapters, of both the Old and the New Testament; subdividing each chapter into sections, marked in the margin by the seven letters, A to G. This good work was done as a convenience for a concordance, which Hugo had made for the Latin Bible. Mordecai Nathan, a celebrated Jewish rabbi, made a similar work, between A. D. 1438 and 1445, for the Hebrew Bible, retaining the cardinal's chapters, but using numerals for some of the verses. Nathan's plan was still further improved by Francis Vatablus, professor of Hebrew in the Royal College of Paris, in his edition of the Latin Bible, with notes, printed by Robert Stephens, the most celebrated printer in Europe, a man of extensive learning, and the author, as well as editor, of many valuable works in classical and sacred literature. He held the high

office of printer to the king of France; but being conscientiously a Protestant, he relinquished that lucrative post, and chose exile and poverty with his friend John Calvin, at Geneva. He divided the New Testament into verses, on a journey from Paris to Lyons; partly as he rode on horseback, and partly at the places where he stopped for refreshment. This was in 1551, the year of his voluntary departure out of his native land; and not improbably he did this work of subdivision upon his journey of exile, for it bears marks of haste in the execution. The edition of the Greek Testament, so distinguished, was by him printed that year in Geneva.

Stephens' subdivisions were generally adopted in the new editions of the New Testament: they were published first in English in the Geneva Bible of 1560; and thence transferred to the editions of the Scriptures printed by royal authority.

Chapters, verses, and points, in the Bible, are admirably convenient as facilities for finding particular passages: but as they were not made under the Divine inspiration, they necessarily participate of human imperfection: in many cases they interfere with the sense, and prevent an inconsiderate reader from discovering. in all its clearness, the full meaning of the sacred writer. Some excellent persons, not knowing the origin of these divisions, overlook the connexion of particular passages, supposing, because of such an arrangement, that every verse contains some distinct or independent point of doctrine or precept of religion: this is, indeed, often the case, such is the amazing fulness of the Word of GOD: but those who would derive profit from the sacred writings, should never omit regarding the design of the inspired penmen, especially from the connexion of every passage; and thus, with a devout and humble heart, seek to discover the mind of the SPIRIT OF GOD.

THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS DISSECTED.

The following calculations, after the manner of the *Masorites*, were published by an anonymous writer of the last century, the fruit, it is said, of three years' labor. They may be interesting, and perhaps useful, though they can scarcely be called *edifying:* they have been pronounced "a singular instance of the trifling employments to which superstition has led mankind."

	IN THE OLD.	IN THE NEW.	TOTAL.
Books	39	27	66
Chapters . . .	929	260	1,189
Verses	23,214	7,959	31,173
Words	592,439	181,253	773,692
Letters	2,728,100	838,380	3,566,480

APOCRYPHA.

Chapters 133. Verses 6,081. Words 152,185.

The middle chapter, and the least in the Bible, is Psalm cxvii.
The middle verse is Psalm cxviii. 8.
The middle line is 2 Chron. iv. 16.
The word *and* occurs in the Old Testament 35,543 times.
The same word occurs in the New Testament 10,684 times.
The word Jehovah occurs 6,855 times.

The middle book of the Old Testament is Proverbs.
The middle chapter is Job xxix.
The middle verse is 2 Chron. xx. between verses 17 and 18.
The least verse is 1 Chron. i. 25

The middle book of the New Testament is 2 Thess.
The middle chapter is between Rom. xiii. and xiv
The middle verse is Acts xvii. 17.
The least verse is John xi. 35.

Ezra vii. 21 has all the letters of the alphabet except j.
2 Kings xix. and Isaiah xxxvii. are alike.

DISSERTATION XXV.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Figurative expressions abound in all languages—Holy Scriptures remarkably—especially the prophetical books—and the Discourses of our Saviour—Such expressions perverted—as to support transubstantiation—Figurative expressions various—Metaphor—Allegory—Parable—Proverb—Metonomy—Anthropopathy—Prosopopœia—Synecdoche—Hyperbole—Irony.

Figurative expressions are common in all languages, especially in those which are the least abundantly furnished with words. Figures of speech present a kind of pictures to the mind, delighting while they afford instruction This mode of instruction, it is admitted, was occasioned principally by the comparative deficiency of words in the early ages of the world; and, therefore, it is the less necessary now that the advancement of society in the arts, sciences, and various refinements, in civilized life, has created vast numbers of additional words. Nevertheless, in the most improved state of the world, all languages have continued to be more or less figurative, especially in their poetry There are no writings known to exist, which are not in some measure metaphorical in their style; but this peculiarity is regarded as constituting no small portion of their essential beauty and expressiveness.

Holy Scripture is remarkably distinguished for its figurative language, particularly the books of the Old Testament. Their antiquity is assigned by most as the chief reason for this fact: but besides this, *two* other reasons are given, *first*, Oriental nations, possessing generally imaginations peculiarly lively, situated in rich and fertile regions, surrounded with various objects equally attractive by their grandeur and beauty, would naturally delight in a mode of expression far more metaphorical and adorned than that used by the graver inhabitants of Europe. Another reason is, many of the books of the Old Testament consist chiefly of Hebrew poetry; and this kind of writing, as allowed by universal consent, requires from its authors illustrations, by means of similitudes and images, drawn from every instructive object which may present itself to their minds. Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the other inspired poets, employ the greatest variety of figures in their different compositions, adorning them with the richest figures of rhetoric, and the most striking metaphors, adapted to impress the minds and affect the hearts of their readers in relation to the things of God.

"I have multiplied visions, and *used similitudes*, by the ministry of the prophets," "saith the Lord God." Hos. xii. 10. This, therefore, should be practically regarded by every reader desiring to derive profit from his study of the Bible. The employment of a figurative style by the inspired lips and pens of the messengers of heaven, indicates the merciful condescension of God to the ignorance and weakness of man, more especially in the earlier ages of the world, when a deficiency of words originated symbolical language. The propriety, design, and beauty, however, of this style, will not be fully apparent

without an intelligent consideration of the countries in which the inspired poets flourished; the peculiar idioms of their speech; and the simple manners of their inhabitants.

A figurative style pervades also the books of the New Testament, especially the edifying discourses of our blessed LORD: they are remarkably metaphorical, and easily understood; yet some ignorant persons, mistaking their meaning, have been led to adopt most extravagant notions for divine doctrine; and not a few Christians even, giving a literal application to those expressions, which were designed to be understood metaphorically. This may be illustrated best by a few examples, which will evince the impropriety of a literal interpretation of certain words of our SAVIOUR.

JESUS, speaking of King Herod, calls him a "*fox*," Luke xiii. 32: that word, as every reader must be aware, is diverted from its literal meaning, which is that of a beast of prey proverbially cunning, and employed to denote a tyrant, cruel and crafty; while that use of the term conveys the idea of consummate hypocrisy and craft, which was truly the character of Herod, as indicated by our SAVIOUR. He said also to the Jews, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." John vi. 51. The Jews affected at least to understand these words of CHRIST literally; objecting, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" ver. 52. They did not, or would not, understand that JESUS designed his life, which he was about to give as an atonement for the sins of the world, as plainly predicted in their own Scriptures. Our SAVIOUR's words, spoken when he instituted the "LORD's Supper," are in like manner perverted: he said of the bread, "This is my body;" and of the cup of wine, "This is my blood, of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Matt. xxvi. 26–28. These words of CHRIST the Roman Catholics profess to receive literally; and, in contradiction to various other plain testimonies of Scripture, as well as in opposition to every principle of nature and sound reasoning, they have, since the *twelfth* century, built upon these words their absurd and monstrous doctrine of *transubstantiation;* that is, the pretended conversion of the bread and wine, which are used in the LORD's supper, into the real body and blood, the soul and divinity of JESUS CHRIST, when the priest pronounces what they call the words of consecration of those elements! Nothing can be more evident to the senses, than that the bread and wine remain the same, without any alteration in their nature and form. The evidence of our senses, by which we discover other things to be true, leads us to the rejection of that doctrine as utterly false: and the plain meaning of our SAVIOUR was, in using those words, that the *bread represents* his body broken for his believing people, and that the *wine exhibits*, in like manner, his atoning blood. Such expressions are in common use, even in the Old Testament. Thus, in reference to the blood appointed as the token of the merciful preservation of Israel in Egypt, Moses says: "It is," or signifies, "the LORD's passover." Exod. xii. 11. "The seven kine are," says Joseph, that is, signify, "seven years." Gen. xli. 26, 27. "The ten horns are," says the angelic interpreter to Daniel, "ten kings," that is, signify such characters, Dan. vii. 24. Our LORD himself frequently used this form of speech, especially in his parables: thus, "The field is," or represents, "the world, the enemy is," or signifies, "the devil; the harvest is," or denotes, "the end of the world; and the reapers are," or represent, "the angels." Matt. xiii. 38. CHRIST also calls himself, in this figurative style, "the door," John x. 7, 9; "the shepherd." ver. 11; "the vine," xv. 1. Every unprejudiced reader cannot but immediately perceive the meaning and the reason of these expressions;

and, with attention, be prepared to understand the figurative language of the Scriptures.

Various classes of metaphorical expressions are employed by the inspired writers, and in frequent combinations, a notice of the principal of which will be given here, with some examples.

I. METAPHOR.—This is a figure of speech founded on some analogy between the similitude and the object with which it is compared; as, "The LORD GOD is a *sun* and *shield*." Psal. lxxxiv. 11. GOD is here declared to be as a sun *to enlighten* his people, and as a shield *to protect* them against their spiritual enemies. CHRIST is also called the "Sun of righteousness," Mal. iv. 2, as his gospel *enlightens* all the nations of the world. Every reader will understand what is meant by "bridling the tongue," Jam. i. 96, and the "sword devouring flesh," Deut. xxxii. 42; perceiving the force of these expressive metaphors.

II. ALLEGORY.—This figure is a continued metaphor; a remarkable example of which we have in the apostle's comparison between a Christian teacher and a builder, 1 Cor. iii. 9–13; in our SAVIOUR'S discourse concerning the eating of his flesh, John vi. 35, 65; and in the description of old age by Solomon, Eccles. xii. 2–6.

III. PARABLE.—This is a kind of comparison in a narration of a fictitious event, applied to convey forcibly, or to illustrate some moral truth or spiritual doctrine: such is the ingenious similitude given in our SAVIOUR'S description of the "Sower," Matt. xiii. 2–23; in that of the "Prodigal son," Luke xv. 11–32; in that of the "Ten virgins," Matt. xxv. 1–13; and in that of the "Rich man and the traveller," addressed by the prophet Nathan to king David, 2 Sam. xii. 1–9.

IV. PROVERB.—This is a concise, sententious, instructive saying, founded on a discriminating observation of human policy and manners. Brevity and elegance are regarded as essential to a proverb: thus, "The rich man's wealth is his strong city; the destruction of the poor is their poverty." Prov. x. 15. "Physician, heal thyself." Luke iv. 23. All nations have their *proverbs;* and the Israelites had very many, especially those of divine inspiration by king Solomon.

V. METONOMY.—This is a figure of speech in which the *cause* is put for the *effect*, or the *effect* for the *cause;* the *subject* for the *adjunct*, or the *adjunct* for the *subject*. This figure is variously used; as, "They have Moses and the prophets," Luke xvi. 29; by which our LORD meant, the *writings*, not the *persons*, of those holy men. The *earth* and the *world* are also frequently used, not only for the ground, but for the *persons* of men. Gen. vi. 11; John i. 19; iii. 16.

VI. ANTHROPOPATHY.—This is a kind of metaphor in which the powers or members of human beings are ascribed to GOD: hence that Infinite Spirit is said to have *eyes*, Psal. xi. 4; Heb. iv. 13; *ears*, Psal. xxxi. 21; *fingers*, viii. 3; an *arm*, Exod. xv. 16; and a *right hand*, xvi. 6. Hence also, GOD, who is immutably holy, is represented as *angry* and *furious*, because of his severe judgments on the wicked, Mic. v. 15; Nah. i. 2; and He with whom "there is not the shadow of turning," is said to "repent," and to "be grieved at heart" Gen. vi. 6.

VII. PROSOPOPŒIA or PERSONIFICATION.—This figure of speech attributes personal actions to fictitious, irrational, or even to inanimate things: as the trees speaking, in the parable of Jotham, Judg ix. 8–15. The Psalmist's personification of the Divine attributes, "Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other," Psal. lxxxix. 60, is regarded as truly beautiful, whether applied to the restoration of the Jewish nation from captivity in Babylon, or to the method of redemption by the atoning sacrifice of

the Son of God. Solomon's personification of wisdom is admirable, Prov. viii. 22–31.

VIII. Synecdoche.—This figure puts a part of a thing for the whole, or the whole for a part; as, "All the world," Luke ii. 1; means the land of Judea, a small province of the Roman empire. "Throughout the world," Acts xxiv. 5, means, by an exaggeration of the orator, different places where the apostle Paul had preached. "Souls," xxvii. 37, evidently means living persons.

IX. Hyperbole.—This is a figure which represents things as being far greater or much smaller than they really are: thus, Abraham's posterity, which was to be exceedingly numerous, is promised to be as the particles of sand or dust of the earth; and as the stars of heaven, Gen. xiii. 16; thus also the *ten* infidel deputies of Israel described themselves as appearing smaller than grasshoppers, when compared with the Canaanites, Num. xiii. 33; and thus Saul and Jonathan, on account of their activity and courage, are described by David, as "swifter than eagles, and stronger than lions." 2 Sam. i. 23.

X. Irony.—This figure employs words which express a different thing from that which is intended; though the examples of its use are not very numerous, there are some in the Scriptures. Thus Job rebukes his censorious friends: "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you." Job xii. 2. Elijah also, in his reproaching of the idolatrous priests of Baal, employs severe irony: "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing; or he is on a journey; or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." 1 Kings xviii. 27. Irony, in its superlative asperity, is called *sarcasm;* thus the Roman soldiers mocking, insulted our Saviour, "Hail, king of the Jews." Matt. xxvii. 29

DISSERTATION XXVI.

GEOGRAPHY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Geography of Scripture embraces the whole earth—especially part of Asia—Ancient monarchies in Asia—Existing ruins prove their greatness—Asia surpasses in climate and fertility both Africa and Europe—Eden, Armenia, Assyria, Mesopotamia, Syria, Phenicia, Arabia, Canaan, Egypt—Canaan the land of promise to Abraham—The land of Israel—The scene of our Saviour's ministry—Christianity opened a new field of geography—Asia Minor—Europe—The world.

Scripture Geography may be said to include generally the whole surface of the earth; as all its regions are comprehended in the book of Genesis. Moses refers to its antediluvian continents and mountains, in his brief records of the creation; while he relates the original re-peopling of the different countries by the descendants of Noah. But the principal countries, except Egypt, that are described or mentioned in the Old Testament, are situated on the south and western borders of the continent of Asia. Egypt, however, is near to that sacred division of the earth, being separated from Asia only by the Red Sea, and the small isthmus of Suez, and forms the north-eastern corner of the continent of Africa.

Asia is the most honored region of the globe. There, it is believed, God created our first parents; in its most fertile districts dwelt the ancient, long-lived patriarchs. Asia was the cradle of the arts and sciences; and there are the valleys and hills made sacred by the ordinances of God, whose favored servants received there the original communications of the Divine revelation recorded in the Holy Scriptures. Noah and his sons sojourned in Asia; thence origina-

ted the primitive colonies, who overspread the earth, and formed the ancient nations; and there were the centres of the famous universal monarchies of Assyria, Babylon, and Persia.

Prodigious ruins of stately palaces, and of various other magnificent edifices, are even now to be seen in many places throughout those regions that formed the celebrated seats of the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian empires; and of the mighty cities which flourished under the power of Greece and Rome. Those vast remains sufficiently attest the multitude and the riches of the former inhabitants of these countries, and corroborate the surprising descriptions of them which have been transmitted to us in the writings of different historians, both ancient and modern.

Inspired and uninspired writers have celebrated Asia, not only as the birthplace of man, but as being far superior to Africa, and even to Europe, both in the salubrious serenity of its air, and in the exuberant fertility of its soil; affording the richest pasture for flocks and herds; producing abundance of corn, and the most delicious fruits; and abounding with the most fragrant and balsamic plants, gums, and spices; supplying, with comparatively little labor, everything adapted to meet the necessities and to promote the gratification of mankind.

Eden and its Paradise, the divinely-prepared residence of our first parents, supposed to have been in Armenia, situated near to the famous river Euphrates, Assyria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Persia, Syria, including Phenicia, Canaan, and Egypt, constitute the principal countries, the history of whose inhabitants is contained in the Old Testament. Sacred geography, however, relates chiefly to the land of Canaan—the Holy Land—so called, as being the land of promise to Abraham, where the venerable patriarchs sojourned; where the kingdom of Israel flourished under David; where GOD manifested his glory in the temple, which had been erected after his own inspired model by king Solomon; where the greater part of the Divine oracles were written; where the SON of GOD became incarnate, and accomplished the glorious work of human redemption; and where the apostles of CHRIST were endowed with supernatural qualifications to go forth as missionaries of eternal mercy among all nations, preaching the gospel of salvation to every tribe of men, bringing them into the church of Messiah, to inherit eternal life in the kingdom of GOD.

Canaan received this name from its being the possession of Canaan, the son of Ham, and grandson of Noah. Gen. x. 6, 19. Its situation, on the west of Asia, near to Africa, and not far from Europe, renders it peculiarly favorable for intercourse with those countries which were most celebrated in antiquity. Canaan has the Mediterranean Sea on the west, and the mountains of Arabia Deserta on the east; extending from Egypt, Idumea, and Arabia Petræa on the south, to the mountains of Lebanon in Syria on the north. Canaan is about *two hundred* miles long, from the city of Dan, which stood at the foot of mount Lebanon, to the city of Beersheba, near Idumea; and between *eighty and ninety* miles broad, from its eastern boundary to the Mediterranean. *Palestine* is an appellation which was given to Canaan in the time of Moses, Exod. xv. 14, derived from the Philistines, who had emigrated from Egypt, expelled the original inhabitants, and settled on the borders of the Mediterranean Sea. It was afterward called the "Land of Israel," the "Land of Judah," and "Judea," from the surviving kingdom of Judah and the Jews; and the "Holy Land," from the sacred ministry and great redemption of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

Christianity being designed, not like the Levitical institutions, for the people of Israel only, but for all the nations of the world, into the whole of which the apostles were commissioned to prosecute their evangelical labors, a new field

of geography was opened by their ministry, far beyond the boundaries of the Holy Land, Babylon, Assyria, or Egypt. They traversed the regions of Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, and various other parts of Europe. These countries and the islands of the Mediterranean might, therefore, seem to demand some particular notice in this place; but the design and limits of this dissertation will not allow of extensive enlargement. The reader, however, is referred to the volumes of the *Pictorial Illustrations of the Bible*, recently published, for more minute and particular information respecting the various places mentioned throughout the Scriptures.

DISSERTATION XXVII.

SACRED HEBREW AND JEWISH FESTIVALS.

Sacred festivals numerous among the Israelites—Computation of their time—Civil and sacred year—Sabbath-day—New moons—New year—Sabbatical year—Jubilee—Its wise and beneficial provisions—Daily sacrifice—Annual day of atonement—Passover—Pentecost—Tabernacles—Purim—Dedication.

DIVINELY instituted festivals and sacred seasons being numerous among the Hebrews and Israelites, some correct knowledge of them must be necessary to the intelligent reader of the Scriptures.

Time has been computed by days, weeks, months, and years, from the beginning of the world; but somewhat differently in different nations. Time began with the creation, which is believed to have been wrought about the latter part of September; and hence the Hebrew year commenced in the month Tisri, corresponding with that and the former part of October: but at the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, it was ordained by Moses, Exod. xii. 2–18; xiii. 4, that the people should commemorate their wonderful redemption by computing their year from the month Abib, corresponding with parts of March and April: Hence the Israelites had two modes of reckoning their year; one *sacred*, beginning in Abib, or the latter part of March; and the other *civil*, beginning in Tisri, or the latter part of September.

I. SABBATH-DAY.—This was the first of all the religious festivals, and so denominated, as being divinely ordained at the beginning of the world, to be observed as a holy rest every seventh day, in commemoration of GOD resting from his finished works of creation. Gen. ii. 1–3. This day was appointed to be perpetually observed by our first parents and by all their posterity, in devout and joyful acknowledgment of GOD as their CREATOR, being alone entitled to religious worship. This sacred festival was especially enjoined upon the Israelites, for themselves and servants, in a summary of duty in the ten commandments, under the additional consideration of their emancipation from Egyptian slavery. Some have supposed that the religious observance of the sabbath was first enjoined upon the Israelites, because *Sabbaths*, or sacred festivals, generally so called, were given as signs of their being in covenant with GOD, Exod. xxxi. 13–17; Ezek. xx. 20, 21: but such divine institutions were then peculiarly appropriated at the first writing of the Divine will, as memorials of the authority and claim of GOD the Creator, Preserver, and Judge, from all ordinary labor, and religious worship, both public and private, were required on the sabbath, Exod. xx. 8–11; xxxi. 13, 18; Isa. lviii. 13.

II. NEW MOONS.—These were festivals observed monthly on the first days of the appearance of the new moons. On those occasions, in addition to the

daily sacrifice, two bullocks, a ram, and seven sheep, together with the meat-offering and a libation, were offered as a burnt-offering to GOD, besides a goat for a sin-offering, and these festivals were observed with joy and the blowing of trumpets, Num. x. 10; xxviii. 11, 14.

III. NEW YEAR.—This was observed as a sacred festival at the new moon of Tisri: it was the commencement of the civil year, commemorating the beginning of time; it was proclaimed by the blowing of trumpets, and kept with the sacrifices on ordinary new moons, besides the addition of a bullock, a ram, seven lambs, and a meat-offering and libation of wine, and a goat for a sin-offering, Lev. xxiii. 24; Num. xxix. 1, 10.

IV. SABBATICAL YEAR.—This festival was kept every *seventh* year, and called the *Sabbath of the land*, and *Year of release*, Lev. xxv. 2–4. Two ordinances peculiarly distinguished this festival from which it was so designated: 1. The land lying fallow, called *Keeping a Sabbath*, verse 6; and, 2. Debtors being released from their debts, whence it was regarded as the "LORD'S release," Deut. xv. 2, 9. As the weekly sabbath was designed to teach that the people were the LORD'S, under obligation to glorify him, this sabbatical year was intended to indicate that the land was his: and lest any should fear want by such a neglect of the land, GOD promised his blessing that the produce of the sixth year should be equal to that of three years, Lev. xxv. 20, 22: besides, no inconsiderable portion of their food the people derived from trees which produced spontaneously, as the fig, the sycamore, the vine, and the date, whose fruits were preserved. Religious instruction was enjoined to be specially imparted to servants, strangers, and the poor during the year of release, that the additional leisure might be properly improved, and the people advanced in the saving knowledge of GOD, Deut. xxxi. 10, 13.

V. JUBILEE.—This was the Grand Sabbatical Year, appointed to be celebrated every fiftieth year, and to be announced by sound of trumpet, on the evening of the great day of Atonement, which was held on the tenth day of the *seventh* month of the *sacred* or the *first* of the *civil* year, Lev. xxv. 8–13. Besides the ordinances relating to the Sabbatical year, there were some peculiarly wise and merciful appointed for the jubilee.

1. All Hebrew servants or bond-slaves, and prisoners, obtained their freedom in the year of jubilee. Lev. xxv. 10, 39, 46; Jer. xxxiv. 8, 17.

2. All lands, whether sold or mortgaged, and the houses of the priests and Levites, which had been sold, were given back to their original proprietors or their families, Lev. xxv. 14–17: except lands which had been consecrated to GOD, and redeemed within a year, xxvii. 6, 21.

3. Debtors who were unable to pay their creditors, or to return borrowed money, were released from their debts. Lev. xxv. 10–16.

Divine wisdom shines conspicuously in the institution of the jubilee, as it conferred numerous and important benefits upon the whole community, and it is scarcely less manifest in the time of its proclamation; this took place at the close of the solemn ceremonies on the day of atonement. That season appears to have been wisely chosen, because the rich and selfish might be expected to be more disposed to comply with the requirements of the law in remitting their claims upon their brethren, and in restoring their property after themselves had been engaged in a solemn sacrifice for sin, and in supplicating pardon from GOD. The season was appropriate also to proclaim the jubilee of universal liberty when the people were rejoicing in the assurance of peace with Heaven by means of the divinely-appointed atonement. Viewed politically, this national jubilee was of great importance; as it was intended to secure the poor from perpetual slavery and from oppression by the nobles: for through this re-

lease, it became impossible for them to acquire an undue portion of property, and the original equality was preserved, the allotments being continued among the several tribes. Even the tribal distinctions were preserved the more easily by this institution; and by the same means the public registers were the more effectually made or corrected in the several tribes; each family could be genealogically traced for ages; and in the tribe of Judah, even down to the advent of the promised MESSIAH.

This jubilee had also a symbolical design, prefiguring an evangelical release of infinitely greater benefits than could be enjoyed in the land of Canaan "The Spirit of the LORD GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." Isa. lxi. 1, 2. This delightful prediction our SAVIOUR applied to himself in the synagogue of Nazareth, Luke iv. 18, 19; and his glorious gospel proclaims, as the great spiritual jubilee, the Divine release from the thraldom of Satan and sin, and the freedom of the sons of GOD to all believers, with the assurance of an incorruptible inheritance in heaven: so that each may enjoy the blessings of his grace on earth, and an eternal weight of glory in the kingdom of GOD.

VI. DAILY SACRIFICE.—This "continual burnt-offering" was two lambs slain and offered daily as an atonement for sin: one was sacrificed in the morning for the sins of the whole people during the night, and the other in the evening for the sins during the day: and to mark the ceremony with the greater solemnity, the sacrifice was double on the sabbath-day, two lambs being offered on each occasion, Exod. xxix. 38, 42: Lev. vi. 9; Num. xxviii. 3, 9.

VII. ANNUAL DAY OF ATONEMENT.—This was held on the tenth day of the *seventh* month of the sacred, or the *first* of the civil year; and it was the most solemn season of humiliation during the whole year; the only one on which food was interdicted from evening to evening, Lev. xxiii. 27, 32. Every part of the ceremonies was most impressive, as performed by the high-priest, clothed in his sacred robes, he led to the altar a bullock devoted as a sacrifice for his own sins, and two goats for the sins of the people, one chosen by lot to be sacrificed to GOD, and the other to be led into the wilderness and liberated: he confessed the sins of himself and family over the head of the bullock, and offered it in sacrifice. Representatives of the twelve tribes, being present, laid their hands upon the head of one of the goats, over which the priest confessed the sins of the nation, and then slew it, offering it in sacrifice by fire unto the LORD. Some of the blood of the bullock the priest carried into the most holy place of the tabernacle, and sprinkled it with his finger seven times upon the mercy-seat; and in like manner he used the blood of the slain goat, thus making an atonement for himself and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel, because of their transgressions in all their sins, Lev. xvi. 1, 19. This part of the ceremony being over, the priest placed both his hands on the head of the live goat, confessing the sins of the nation over it, and putting them upon the head of the goat, which was then led away by a proper person into the wilderness, as some suppose, to signify the liberation of Israel from punishment merited by their sins, 20, 22, 26, 28. The priest having offered, with various ceremonies, a burnt-offering for himself and another for the people, the solemnities of the day were closed by the proclamation of the grand jubilee, 24, 34; xxv. 9

VIII. PASSOVER.—This celebrated festival was appointed to commemorate the preservation of the Israelites in Egypt, when the destroying angel visited every family of their oppressors with the stroke of death upon their first-born, passing over the houses of the obedient believers in the mission of Moses, Exod.

xii. 1, 28. This festival was observed annually during seven days, from the fifteenth of the month Abib, corresponding with the beginning of April; xxiii. 15; Lev. xxiii. 4, 8; Num. xxviii. 16; Deut. xvi. 1, 8.

The Passover in Egypt was peculiarly remarkable in all its circumstances, and the period was truly memorable, as the "self-same day" was the termination of the four hundred and thirty years of the sojourning of the Hebrews, from the promise of GOD to Abraham, Gen. xv. 13, 14; Exod. xii. 41, 42. This deliverance, therefore, formed an era in the history of Israel, and it henceforward marked the commencement of their year in all the sacred computations, Exod. xii. 2, 18.

Various ceremonies were observed on the first day of the passover, and the sacrificed lamb was eaten by not fewer than ten persons, and not more than twenty in a company. At the close of the supper, "the cup of blessing," 1 Cor. x. 16, was drunk, and the company sang Psalms cxv., cxvi., cxvii., cxviii. Some particulars of this custom may be understood from the records of the Evangelist, relating to the keeping of the passover by our SAVIOUR, Matt. xxvi. 2, 19; Mark xiv. 1, 26; Luke xxii. 1, 15; John xiii. 1, 26. "Christ our passover was sacrificed for us," the apostle says, 1 Cor. v. 7, leading us to regard the passover of Israel as typical of the sacred festival appointed by our REDEEMER, in the LORD's supper: that like as the Israelites commemorated their redemption from Egypt by the symbol of the passover, Exod. xii. 26, 27, so Christians should celebrate their eternal redemption and salvation by the precious blood of CHRIST, 1 Cor. xi. 23, 29.

IX. PENTECOST.—This word is Greek, and signifies the *fiftieth*, and is the name given in the New Testament, Acts ii. 1, to the "Feast of weeks," Exod. xxxiv. 22; Deut. xvi. 10. This festival was called the *feast of weeks*, because it commenced at the end of *seven weeks* after the *second* day of the Passover; and Pentecost, because it began on the *fiftieth* day from the first day of that festival: it was observed as a national thanksgiving for the harvest, the first fruits of which were offered to the LORD with various sacrifices, Lev. xxiii. 10, 20; Num. xxviii. 26, 34. Many foreign Jews frequented Jerusalem at this, as at other festivals, as we are assured by the historian Josephus, and as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles: that immediately following the ascension of our SAVIOUR, was signally honored by the effusion of the Spirit, and the conversion of *three thousand* to the church of CHRIST, Acts ii. 5, 41.

X. TABERNACLES.—This was a festival of eight days, annually, called also the "Feast of ingathering:" it was held at the close of the whole harvest and vintage, commencing the fifteenth day of Tisri, corresponding with the beginning of October; and was designed as a national thanksgiving for the blessings of the year. At this festival, the people were required to dwell for the time in booths, to remind them of their forefathers sojourning forty years in the deserts of Arabia, Exod. xxiii. 16; xxxiv. 22; Lev. xxiii. 39, 42; Deut. xvi. 13, 16. This feast was a season of the greatest festivity, especially the eighth day, with the Israelites, and more sacrifices were offered on this than on any other occasion, Num. xxix. 12–39.

Some say that the priests, at least in the latter ages of the Jewish polity, went every morning and drew from the well or fountain of Siloam three logs of water in a golden vessel, which they carried into the temple, and poured it out near the altar, the Levites, in procession, singing Psalms cxiii., cxiv., cxv., cxvi., cxvii., cxviii., with instrumental music: they founded this custom on Isa. xii. 3, and some regarded it as a symbol of *joy*, others of *rain*, and others of the effusion of the Holy Spirit, as intimated by our LORD, John vii. 37. Various other ceremonies were afterward added by later Jews. It is also said that the Jews,

during each day of the feast, holding branches of the palm, myrtle, and willow, walked in procession round the altar, shouting HOSANNA! HOSANNA! and that on the seventh day this was repeated seven times, in memory of the conquest of Jericho, and hence it was called the GREAT HOSANNA.

XI. PURIM.—This festival appears to have been merely of human appointment, designed to commemorate the deliverance of the Jews from the bloody stratagem contrived by Haman, in the reign of Ahasuerus, king of Persia: it was called Purim, from a Persian word signifying *Lot;* as Haman was daily exercised for a whole year casting lots to determine the most *fortunate* day for the accomplishment of his wishes, Esth iii. 7; ix. 26. At this festival, the book of Esther was read in the synagogues, and on pronouncing the name of Haman, the Jews clapped their hands and struck the benches with their fists or with mallets, exclaiming, "Let his memory perish!" They sent messes of meat to their poorer brethren on the occasion, spending the day in conviviality, frequently not agreeable to the principles of religion.

XII. DEDICATION.—This festival was kept in memory of the cleansing and re-dedication of the second temple, in the year 164 before the advent of CHRIST, after the house of GOD had been profaned with idolatrous rites, for three years, by Antiochus, king of Syria, John x. 22; 1 Maccabees iv. 52, 59; 2 Mac. x. 1, 8.

DISSERTATION XXVIII.

HEBREW, JEWISH, AND CHRISTIAN ECCLESIASTICAL PERSONS AND SECTS.

Various ecclesiastical classes noted in Scripture—Call of Abraham—Israelites—Patriarchs—Prophets—Priests—Levites—Nazarites—Judges—Nethinims—Samaritans—Scribes—Pharisees—Sadducees—Essenes—Apostles—Evangelists—Bishops—Elders—Deacons—Herodians—Galileans—Libertines—Stoics—Epicureans—Nicolaitanes.

SACRED and ecclesiastical persons were of several classes, as mentioned in the Old and New Testaments; and these, with their peculiar offices, it is necessary to consider intelligently, to read with edification certain parts of Holy Scripture.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with the posterity of Israel, were divinely selected and separated from all the nations of the earth, for the preservation of true religion in the world. Abraham was, therefore, brought from Chaldean idolatry, to receive special revelations from God, and with his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob, to be disciplined and trained for his service, while sojourning in the land of Canaan, Gen. xi. 31; xii. 1, 4; xv., xvii., xxii.; Josh. xxiv. 23; Gen. xxvi., xxviii., xxxv. Egypt was designed as the place of increase and trial to the descendants of Abraham; and from that "house of bondage" they were redeemed as the chosen people of the LORD. Several classes of offices were necessarily instituted in forming that community, and these, therefore, with some others, shall be given in order:—

1. ISRAELITES.—This is properly a designation of the posterity of Jacob; but it is also employed to indicate their being a sacerdotal people, and called to sustain a special relation to GOD: hence, while they were encamped before Mount Sinai, to receive the tables of the law and the institution of covenant obedience, "Moses went up unto GOD, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell unto the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey

my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine: and *ye shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*" Exod. xix. 3. Under this character they were constantly addressed and called to the practice of universal holiness, Lev. xi 44, 45; Deut. vii. 6. This title, however, as denoting *sanctity* and the special Divine favor, was abused by the Jewish doctors: their spiritual pride leading them generally to despise all other nations, as *profane*, and call them *dogs*, having no part in the world to come, or in the mercy of GOD, Mark ix. 10, 11; xv. 22, 27.

2. PATRIARCHS.—These were the chiefs, fathers, or heads of families, in the earlier ages of the world. Adam, Seth, Enoch, and Methuselah, were among the most distinguished antediluvian patriarchs; and the extraordinary length of their lives has made them famous in the annals of the world, and in the traditions of ancients, even of heathen nations. Noah was the chief patriarch and founder of the restored world Abraham, Melchisedek, Ishmael, Isaac, Esau, Jacob, and his twelve sons, Job, Jesse, and David, were the most eminent patriarchs of sacred history, after Noah, and the founders of mighty families. In Abraham and Job especially, we perceive instructive examples of the patriarchal government: they were priests as well as princes, and exercised sovereign authority in their own families.

3. PROPHETS.—These were illustrious persons, to whom GOD revealed himself; making known to them his holy will for their own instruction, and for them to teach others. Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and David, are most distinguished as the earlier prophets of GOD. During the period of about *eleven hundred* years, from Moses, the first writer of the will of GOD, to the time of Malachi, a succession of prophets flourished, as a class of extraordinary ministers of the Divine dispensations of mercy to mankind; and the writings of many of them, especially of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, form a large and most valuable portion of the Old Testament.

Prophets, under the Christian dispensation, were a class of extraordinary ministers, eminently endowed by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, to preach the gospel, especially in expounding the writings of the Old Testament, proving the fulfilment of ancient prophecies in the person, ministry, and reconciliation of JESUS CHRIST, 1 Cor. xii. 4, 10, 29.

4. PRIESTS.—These were persons who offered sacrifice for sin, and made intercession with GOD, for themselves and others. Abel, Noah, Abraham, Job, and others, officiated as priests in their several families, according to the custom of Adam, who appears to have been divinely instructed to offer sacrifices, which were to prefigure the promised Redeemer and Saviour.

Priests in Israel were divinely appointed for the services of the people, in the daily and other sacrifices at the altar and the mercy-seat; they were of the family of Aaron, who, with his sons, was consecrated to his sacred office by Moses, Exod. xxix.; Lev. viii., ix., x. The posterity of Eleazar and Ithamar had so increased in the time of David, as to require to be formed into *twenty-four* classes, each of which to officiate a week in a course, 1 Chron. xxiv. 1–19. The first-born succeeded Aaron in the office of high priest: though in the disordered times of the Jewish state, ambitious usurpers ascended the pontifical seat, which was sometimes sold to the highest bidder. There appears to have been a *vicar* or *second* priest, who might officiate in case the high priest himself were ill, or incapacitated for duty, especially on the great day of atonement, 1 Kings iv. 4; Jer. lii. 2; John xviii. 13, 14. Aaron and his successors in the high priesthood, in their necessary *legal* perfection, or freedom from natural defects, in their consecration, sacrifices, and intercessions, significantly prefigured

the glorious and redeeming priesthood of our SAVIOUR, Exod. xxviii., xxix.; Lev. xvi.; Heb. iii., x.

5. LEVITES.—These were the other branches of the tribe of Levi, besides the family of Aaron; they were claimed as GOD's inheritance, or clergy, and separated from the other tribes, when they were solemnly consecrated to GOD as his peculiar servants, to be wholly devoted to the service of the tabernacle. Lev. viii. 5, 22. As GOD's clergy, the Levites were not allowed to possess any share of the landed property of Canaan, except certain cities for their residence; they were to derive their support from the tithes of the produce of the land voluntarily paid by the people, Num. xviii. 20–32; xxxv. Many of the Levites were judges, magistrates, and the literati of Israel, filling various important offices in the nation. David allotted to them special duties as musicians and singers, 1 Chron. xv. 2, 16–27; and this arrangement was continued in the service of the temple of Solomon, 2 Chron. v. 4–12.

6. NAZARITES.—These were persons under a solemn vow made by their parents or by themselves, to drink no wine nor strong drink, and to be specially devoted to GOD, Num. vi. 2, 21. Samson and John the Baptist were under vows by their parents, Judg. xiii. 2, 5, 12, 23; Luke i. 13, 15. Nazarites, in some cases, were under their obligation for life, as Samson, John, and the Rechabites, Jer. xxxv.; others were bound by their vows only for a certain season, Acts xviii. 18; xxi. 21, 26.

7. JUDGES.—These were either ordinary magistrates, Exod. xviii. 26; xxi. 6, 22; or extraordinary rulers, divinely raised up to deliver the people, before the establishment of monarchy in Israel, Judg. ii. 16, 18. The age of the Judges of Israel was a melancholy period in the history of that people, showing the appalling evils of anarchy in a country.

8. NETHINIMS.—These were properly laborers, employed in the more burdensome service of the tabernacle and temple; as hewing and carrying wood, and supplying water; they were originally Canaanites of Gibeon, spared by Joshua and Israel, and so designated from the Hebrew word *Nathan*, signifying *to give* or *to devote*, Josh. ix.; Ezra viii. 20.

9. SAMARITANS.—These were regarded, in a great degree, as a religious sect; they were the mingled people, inhabitants of the cities in Samaria, after the overthrow of the kingdom of Israel by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria: many of them were brought from the surrounding nations, and united with the impoverished Israelites, who set up various forms of idolatry in connexion with the worship of the true GOD. "So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places. They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away thence." 2 Kings xvii. 32, 33.

After the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, and the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem, their religion was imperfectly reformed, so that they received the writings of Moses; and Sanballat erected for them a temple on Mount Gerizim, in opposition to that of the Jews, Neh. iv. 1; vi. 1. They pretended friendship to the Jews, or sought their injury, as it appeared likely to suit their interest, so that enmity was cherished in regard to each other; yet the Samaritans also retained an expectation of the promised MESSIAH, John iv. 9, 25.

10. SCRIBES.—These properly were *writers*, as the secretaries of kings or governments, 2 Sam. viii. 17; xx. 25; 1 Kings iv. 3. Learned and wise men were so called, as Jonathan the uncle of David, 1 Chron. xxvii. 32; and Baruch, the amanuensis of Jeremiah the prophet, Jer. xxxvi. 26. Doctors and copiers

of the law were called scribes, as Ezra, Ezr. vii. 6; and many at the time of the ministry of CHRIST, Matt. v. 20; vii. 29; these, influenced chiefly by sordid interest, were among the most violent enemies of our SAVIOUR, xxiii. 2, 13, 23–29

11. PHARISEES.—These formed the chief section of the Jewish church in the time of CHRIST; they included the principal doctors of the law, and the great body of the people, who were attached to them. The Pharisees held the essential doctrines of divine truth, but they esteemed the traditions of their famous rabbis as giving the meaning of the Scriptures, which were, therefore, practically regarded as of inferior authority to their interpretations. They scornfully despised the ignorant populace, who yet held them in such estimation, that it was a common opinion, if only two persons were admitted to heaven one would be a Pharisee. Generally they were extremely proud of their religious excellences, and entertained the notion of their meriting, by their duties, even the mercy and favor of GOD! Our SAVIOUR, therefore, was peculiarly severe in censuring their pride and hypocrisy, as rendering them less qualified for heaven than publicans and harlots, and as specially deserving the indignation of GOD, Matt. xxiii. 2, 29.

12. SADDUCEES.—These were a sect of the Jews, generally of the more intellectual and speculative class: they derived their name from Sadoc, a doctor of great eminence, who flourished about the year B. C. 280. The Sadducees, at first, disallowed only the traditions of the elders, as having no divine obligation; afterwards, however, having adopted various notions from the heathen philosophy of Epicurus, they rejected all the books of the Old Testament except the writings of Moses. They believed in the existence and perfections of GOD as the Creator and Governor of all things, but denied the immortality of the soul, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, of future rewards and punishments, and of the existence of angelic spirits, Matt. xxii. 23; Acts iv. 1; xxiii. 8. "Their number was the fewest of all the sects of the Jews; but they were only those of the best quality and of the greatest riches among them. Whenever they sat in judgment upon criminals, they always were for the severest sentence against them." Such is the testimony of Josephus, the Jewish historian, concerning the Sadducees.

13. ESSENES.—These were a branch of the Pharisees, but they are not expressly mentioned in the New Testament; because, as it is supposed, they pursued a more mortified course of life, and were less guilty of hypocrisy and immoral indulgences. They discouraged or disallowed marriage, adopting children from the more indigent to bring up in their principles. Those who sought admission into their fellowship were required to continue on probation for three years, and on being received into full communion, they were bound to worship GOD, to practise righteousness, to communicate none of their mysteries to strangers, even to save their lives, and to conceal none from their brethren. They held riches in contempt, and their property in common: they ate at a common table, and were extremely abstemious. John the Baptist is supposed to have lived among the Essenes. Those of this sect living in Egypt were called THERAPEUTÆ.

14. APOSTLES.—These were the chosen messengers or ambassadors of CHRIST, sent to proclaim his doctrines and redemption to all the nations of the world, for their regeneration and salvation. They were qualified with miraculous endowments by the Holy Spirit, which the SAVIOUR promised to hem as a proof of his ascension to heaven; and they could have no successors in office, as it was essential to their qualifications that they should have seen CHRIST after his resurrection: he appeared personally to Paul at his conversion, constituting him, in an extraordinary manner, and especially an apostle to the

Gentiles, Matt. x. 2; Mark iii. 14; Luke vi. 13; John xiv., xv., xvi.; Acts i., ii. 1, 4; ix., xxvi. 15, 18.

15. Evangelists.—These were preachers of the gospel, assistants to the apostles in founding the kingdom of Christ in the world: they accompanied the apostles in their missionary labors, and were sent by them to assist and perfect the organization of the infant churches, after converts had been made by the preaching of the apostles, or of themselves. They directed these newly formed congregations in selecting fit persons for their deacons, and for their elders or bishops, whom they ordained to the pastoral office. Apollos, Barnabas, Timothy, and Titus, appear to have rendered great service in this part of their ministerial duty in advancing the kingdom of their Lord, Acts xvi. 1, 3; xviii. 24, 28; 1 Tim. i. 3; iii. 1, 15; 2 Tim. iv. 5, 11; Tit. i. 5; iii. 12, 13. Mark and Luke, being fully instructed in the history of the ministry of Christ, were inspired to write two of the Gospels.

16. Bishops.—Overseers: these were the ordinary overseers, or pastors of the Christian congregations, as constituted by the apostles, Acts xx. 17, 28; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 1–7.

17. Elders.—Presbyters or seniors; these, as indicating Christian ministers, were the pastors or bishops of the churches of Christ: the words Bishops and Elders are, therefore, used interchangeably for the same persons, as is acknowledged by all the best critics on the New Testament, Acts xx. 17, 28.

18. Deacons.—Servants or ministers; the officers chosen by Christian churches to manage their temporal affairs, especially to dispense their charities to the poorer members, Acts vi. 1–6; 1 Tim. iii. 8, 13.

19. Herodians.—These were in reality not a religious sect, but a political party of religionists among the Jews, Matt. xxii. 16.

20. Galileans.—These were not so much a religious class, as a turbulent political faction of the Jews: their chief was Judas the Galilean, Luke xiii. 1, 2; Acts v. 37.

21. Libertines.—These were Jewish proselytes having a synagogue at Jerusalem, but distinguished by the privilege of being free citizens of Rome, Acts vi. 9.

22. Stoics.—These were a class or sect of heathen philosophers, whose founder was Zeno, a teacher of great fame at Athens: his chief doctrine was, that all things are held and governed by an irreversible fate, Acts xvii. 18.

23. Epicureans.—These were a class or sect of heathen philosophers, founded by Epicurus, whose fame, as a teacher, was great at Athens: his distinguishing tenet was that of pleasure being the chief end of man, Acts xvi.; 18.

24. Nicolaitanes.—These were a class or sect of professing Christians, who denied the real humanity of Christ: they participated in the idolatrous sacrifices of the heathens, joining in their abominable practices, Rev. ii. 6, 15. Some have thought that they were so called from Nicolas, one of the seven Deacons of the Jewish-Christian church at Jerusalem, Acts vi. 5.

DISSERTATION XXIX.

FULFILLED PROPHECIES.

Futurity known only to God—Prophecy a miracle of knowledge—Evidence of Divine Revelation—Scripture prophecies form a grand series—Delivered at first verbally—Recorded in the Old Testament and in the New—Select prophecies here noticed—I. Noah and his sons, Japheth, Shem, and Ham. II. The Ishmaelites and Arabs. III. The Israelites and Jews. IV. Judea. V. Idumea. VI. Egypt. VII. Nineveh. VIII. Babylon.

Futurity is known to Omniscience; and it is God's sole prerogative to "declare the things that shall come to pass." Prophecy is therefore a miracle of knowledge—and the declaration of future events is so far beyond the power of human discernment or sagacity, that it is justly regarded as the highest evidence that can be produced of supernatural intercourse with the Deity, and of the truth of divine revelation.

Prophecy abounds in the Holy Scriptures, in such a series, and of a kind so magnificent, that the evidences of its fulfilment may be examined, in numerous instances, by those of the present age, with increasing light and more powerful demonstration of its divinity. Every reader of the Bible perceives that prophecy continues through both the Old and New Testaments, embracing a vast extent; that it commenced from the fall of man, and that it reaches to the consummation of all things; that for many ages it was delivered with some obscurity to few persons, and with large intervals between one prediction and another, but that, at length, it became more clear, more frequent, and was uniformly carried on in the line of one people, the seed of Abraham, who were separated from the rest of mankind, to be especially the witnesses of the true God, and the repository of the Divine oracles; that, with some intermission, the spirit of prophecy continued among that people until the manifestation of the predicted Messiah; that Jesus Christ and some of his apostles exercised the same power in the most conspicuous manner, and that they left behind them various prophecies of the most sublime and glorious character, recorded for our instruction in the New Testament.

Divine prophecy, so extensive and various as contained in the Scriptures, cannot be fully surveyed within the brief limits assigned to this Dissertation. Those predictions which relate to the advent, character, ministry, and kingdom of Jesus Christ, which indeed are, in many respects, by far the most important, demand a large volume. The design of this essay is to notice only a few of those relating to the several people and countries, the fulfilment of which is peculiarly remarkable, and the proofs of which are manifest to every traveller or intelligent reader, and some even to the most common observers in our own land, demonstrating the truth and divinity of the Holy Scriptures.

CHAPTER I.

NOAH'S SONS, JAPHETH, SHEM, AND HAM.

Noah inspired to utter an oracle—Japheth's posterity people Europe—Shem's descendants occupy Asia—The prophecy of the Messiah—Ham's posterity dwell in Africa and Canaan—Their degraded condition.

Noah on a memorable occasion was inspired to declare the future condition of his sons and of their posterity. Moved by the Spirit of God to utter his holy ora-

cle, Noah said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said Blessed be the LORD GOD of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. GOD shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." Gen. ix. 25, 27.

JAPHETH was the eldest son of Noah; his name signifies *enlargement;* and his posterity have been surprisingly extended. For they have peopled Europe, Asia Minor, part of Armenia, the whole of the regions north of mount Taurus; and probably of America, Gen. x. 2, 5.

SHEM signifies *renown;* and his fame has been truly great both temporally and spiritually. His descendants occupied the finest regions of Upper and Central Asia, particularly Armenia, Media, Persia, Syria, &c. Shem's chief renown, however, consisted in his being the ancestor of Abraham, and the nation of Israel, and especially of the Messiah, the seed of the woman, to which it is thought that Noah might allude, when he exclaimed, "Blessed be the LORD GOD of Shem!"

Difficulty is felt by some in rightly interpreting the words, "GOD shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." But whether they are understood of GOD or of Japheth dwelling in the tents of Shem, the prophecy has been literally fulfilled, as GOD dwelt in a singularly glorious manner, by his word, ordinances, and visible glory among his posterity, the Israelites; and the numerous descendants of Japheth, in Europe and America, have been made equal participators in the blessings of the gospel by JESUS CHRIST.

HAM signifies *black* or *burnt*, perhaps indicating the sultry regions which his descendants should occupy. Cush and his posterity peopled the hot southern regions of Asia, Susiana, and the shores of the Persian Gulf. Canaan and his sons occupied Syria, Canaan, and Palestine; and the sons of Mizraim peopled Egypt, Libya, and Africa, Gen. x. 6, 20.

Ham and his son had dishonored their venerable father; and upon them he pronounced the prophetical malediction: "Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." In accordance with this denunciation, the devoted nations, which GOD destroyed before the Israelites, were descended from Canaan: so were the Phenicians and the Carthaginians, who were subjugated with the most terrible destruction by the Greeks and Romans. And the African nations, whose miseries have become proverbial through the world for the last three centuries, and even to our times, by the operations of the horrible slave-trade, are also descended from Ham, the son of Noah. But such a series of events, continued through more than four thousand years, could have been foreseen and foretold only by one inspired of GOD!

CHAPTER II.

THE ISHMAELITES AND ARABS.

Abraham assured of a numerous posterity—Ishmael his eldest son—GOD's prophetic assurance to his mother—Ishmaelites in Arabia—Character of the Arabs—their unaltered manners—Modern Arabs—Description of an Arab camp.

ABRAHAM was divinely assured, "when as yet he had no child," and greatly advanced in years, that his posterity should be exceedingly multiplied; and he was also assured that they should become "as the stars of heaven," and "as the sand upon the sea-shore," Gen. xii. 2; xv. 5; xvii. 5; xxii 17; and in less than five hundred years it constituted several numerous nations, besides the Israelites.

Ishmael was the eldest son of Abraham: concerning him an angel of the LORD declared to his mother Hagar, before he was born—"I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.—Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael, because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him: and he shall dwell in the presence of his brethren." xvi. 10–12. GOD also declared to Abraham, in answer to his prayer, "As for Ishmael, I have heard thee; Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes shall he beget; and I will make him a great nation." xvii. 20.

These divine predictions concerning Ishmael have been verified in all particulars, in a manner most wonderful. About one hundred and fifty years afterwards, the family of Ishmael was so increased, that we read of Ishmaelites as Midianitish merchantmen trading into Egypt. Gen. xxxvii. 26, 36. Ishmael's posterity was "multiplied exceedingly" in various tribes; some are called Hagarenes, Psalm lxxxiii. 6; and Hagarites, 1 Chron. v. 10, 20; from his mother, Hagar; Nabatheans, from his son Nebaioth, Isa. lx. 7; Gen. xxv. 13; and Itureans, from his son Itur or Jetur, ver. 17.

Ishmael himself subsisted by hunting and by rapine in the wilderness; and his posterity have, in every succeeding age, infested Arabia and the adjacent countries by their predatory incursions. Every petty chief among the Arabians considers himself a sovereign prince in his own district; and though they appear divided and separated as to their individual interests, they are all united in a sort of league against others. The Arabs have lived in a state of continual warfare with the rest of the world, robbers on land and pirates by sea: and, as they have been such enemies to all other nations, all mankind have appeared in hostility against them. Travellers in their country have been obliged to proceed in caravans, or large companies, armed for their own defence against the assaults of those free-booters, marching with their sentinels, to keep watch like as in an army;—so literally has the Divine prediction been fulfilled in himself and his posterity, "His hand shall be against every man."

"He shall dwell in the presence of his brethren," has also been surprisingly fulfilled. Ishmael's country is situated near to that part of the globe in which society originated, and where the first kingdoms were formed. The greatest empires of the world arose, flourished, and fell around them. But they were not secluded from intercourse with foreign nations, so as through ignorance to remain attached to their simple and primitive manners. They were united, in the early period of their history, as allies, with the most powerful monarchs of the East; and under Mohammed they carried their arms over the most considerable kingdoms of the earth. The Ishmaelites might emphatically be called "a great nation;" as the Arabians, in the middle ages, possessed themselves of large provinces in Spain and the south of Europe; and, by their rapid and extensive conquests, erected one of the largest empires that ever existed in the world.

Complete revolutions have taken place in most other nations, totally changing their manners and customs: but the Arabs continue the same in their own country; and travellers through successive generations have traversed it in caravans of merchants and large companies of Mohammedan pilgrims, as in former ages: even their system of religion has undergone several total changes. These circumstances might be supposed to have annihilated the most rooted prejudices and changed the most inveterate habits: but they have produced scarcely any effect upon the manners of the Arabs; they still preserve, unim-

paired, the most correct resemblance to the first descendants of their venerated ancestor, Ishmael.

Many travellers have described the peculiar manners of the modern Arabians; and a recent intelligent eye-witness of their customs and mode of life, after describing his visit to an Arab camp, remarks: "On the smallest computation, such must have been the manners of these people for more than three thousand years:" verifying thus the Divine predictions given concerning Ishmael before he was born, that he in his posterity should be "a wild man," and continue to be such in his manners, though the people should "dwell in the presence of their brethren," distinguished by customs altogether dissimilar. That an acute and active race surrounded by civilized and luxurious nations, should, from their earliest existence to the present times, be found a wild people dwelling thus in the presence of their brethren, as these nations may be called, unsubdued and and unchangeable, must be regarded as a standing miracle—one of those mysterious facts which prove the truth and divinity of prophecy as contained in the Holy Scriptures.

CHAPTER III.

THE ISRAELITES AND JEWS.

Multitude of the Israelites—Moses and other prophets predict their future condition—Predictions of Moses, of Jeremiah, of Ezekiel—Moses foretels the conquest of the Romans—Jeremiah predicts the dispersion of the Jews—their preservation as a distinct people—their existence in all nations—Hosea's predictions—their aversion to idolatry—their expectation of the Messiah.

ABRAHAM was divinely assured that his posterity should be numerous "as the stars in heaven;" and Moses beheld that prediction in a great measure fulfilled when he brought out the people of Israel from Egypt. He wrote, therefore, "The LORD your GOD hath multiplied you, and behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude." Deut. i. 10.

Moses and many other of the prophets predicted with wonderful precision the future condition of the Israelites, their various sufferings and dispersion on account of their wickedness; their preservation as a distinct people, and their ultimate recovery through the sovereign mercy and goodness of GOD. Their inspired legislator foresaw the infidelity and disobedience of his people, and foretold their captivity while the land should "enjoy her sabbaths." JEHOVAH, their GOD, by his servant declared,—"If ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments,—I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest; and enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when you dwelt upon it." Lev. xxvi. 14, 33–35. This prediction was fulfilled during the seventy years' captivity of the Jews in Babylon: for from the time of Saul to the captivity, there were about 490 years, in which period there were 70 sabbatic years that had been neglected by the Hebrews.

Jeremiah foretold the state and duration of that captivity; declaring—"And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." Jer. xxv. 11. This prediction delivered in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, began to be accomplished immediately; and it was exactly seventy years from that period to the proclamation of Cyrus for the emancipation of the Jews.

Moses predicted, as he solemnly and repeatedly warned the people of Israel, the miseries which their idolatry learned in Egypt would bring upon them: but Ezekiel foretold that after the captivity in Babylon, they would never more be guilty of that corrupting practice so awfully provoking to GOD. "Thus will I make thy lewdness to cease from thee, and thy whoredom brought from the land of Egypt: so that thou shalt not lift up thine eyes unto the idols of Egypt, nor remember Egypt any more." Ezek. xxii. 27; xx. 7, 8. This frequently-repeated prediction has received a most wonderful accomplishment: for, after the humiliation in Babylon, neither the authority, frowns, and terrors of their conquerors, nor the favor and example of their most powerful neighbors, nor their own fears, interests, and predilections for the sensual services of idols, could ever prevail with them to run into gross idolatry, even to this time, a period of nearly *twenty-five centuries!*

Moses foretold the conquest of the Jews by the invincible Romans, permitted on account of their foreseen departure from the service of GOD. "The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whom thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young: and he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee." Deut. xxviii. 49–51. Divine inspiration frequently describes the Chaldean armies under the figure of a great eagle, yet these verses especially predict the desolations brought on the Jews by the soldiers of the Romans. Their legions came from a country far more distant than Chaldea is from Judea; their conquests were rapid, so as fitly to be compared to an eagle's flight, and their standard bore the figure of that bird of prey: they spake a language to which the Jews were strangers, the Latin having but little resembance to the Hebrew, of which the Chaldee was merely a dialect; their appearance and victories were terrible, and their yoke of iron, and the havoc which their legions made, were such as to produce the deepest dread among the people at the name of Roman!

Moses, foreseeing the apostacy of the Israelites from their divine institutions, and their consequent wickedness, wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: "If ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; and if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments so that ye break my covenant, I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries into desolation; and I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate. And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all the nations whither the LORD shall lead thee," Lev. xxvi. 14, 15, 31, 33; Deut. xxviii. 37.

Jeremiah predicted, by the same inspiration: "I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth; to be a curse, and an astonishment, and a hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them: because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them," Jer. xxix. 18, 19. "And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utteriy, and to break my covenant with them; for I am the LORD their GOD." Lev. xxvi. 44.

These predictions, being divine, are delivered with all the confidence of truth and with all the clearness of history. They represent the causes, the nature,

the manner, the extent, and the continuance of their dispersion; they describe their persecutions, their sufferings, their blindness of mind, their impenitent infidelity, and their grievous oppressions, the universal mockery, the unlimited diffusion, and the unextinguishable existence of that extraordinary people. Strong were the ties which bound the Jews to the land of Canaan. They had the most powerful reasons for their attachment. It was not only a glorious land, "flowing with milk and honey," but it was the inheritance of their fathers, and the special gift of Heaven, where only many of their religious customs could be observed as commanded in their law. Nothing could separate them, during the terrible siege of Jerusalem, from their sacred temple, till it was blazing around them, and multitudes perished in its flames; and nothing could tear them from their country but the overwhelming power of the Roman armies. They were, however, rooted up as a nation, and banished from their own land; and by an imperial edict it was made death for a Jew to set his foot within the precincts of Jerusalem!

Surprising as is the dispersion of the Jews, the extent of it is still more remarkable than the manner in which it has been effected. They have traversed the wide world, and they are found in every civilized kingdom. Jews are numerous in Syria, in Poland, in Turkey, in Germany, and in Holland; in Russia, France, Spain, Italy, Britain, and America. In Persia, India, and China, they are found, though more thinly scattered. They have trodden the snows of Siberia, and the sands of the burning desert; and the European traveller hears of their existence in regions which he is unable to reach, among nations in the very centre of Africa. From one end of the earth to the other the Jews, and the Jews only, have been dispersed among all nations, to illustrate the truth of Divine Revelation.

Christians are looking forward, however, by the same light of divine prophecy, to times which shall be glorious even for the Jews: they behold them now with wonder, "a peculiar people," abhorring idolatry; and by their profession witnesses for the unity and perfections of GOD: yet, as Hosea foretold, "abiding without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim," Hos. iii. 4. But, as the same prophet declares, "the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their GOD, and David (MESSIAH) their king;" when they shall be brought into the church of CHRIST with "the fulness of the Gentiles." That in all the changes which have transpired in the kingdoms of the earth, from the days of Moses to the present time, a period of more than *three thousand three hundred* years, no circumstance should have arisen to prevent the evident accomplishment of these predictions; but that the present state of the nations, whether Jewish, Christian, Mohammedan, or Heathen, should be such as to render them easily capable of a literal completion, in every particular, if such be the will of GOD, is a miracle,—a standing miracle to us; and which has nothing parallel to it in the whole history of the Divine dispensations. And why is such a continued miracle of providence, as the preservation of the Jews a distinct people among all nations, exhibited to the world, but for the greater illustration of divine truth and grace, and the better accomplishment of the promises of GOD, on record yet to be fulfilled, to the glory of the REDEEMER of Israel, the king MESSIAH?

CHAPTER IV.

JUDEA OR CANAAN.

Judea indicates all Canaan—Proverbially fertile—Moses threatens their disobedience with barrenness—Isaiah predicts desolation—Jeremiah and Ezekiel repeat the same—Desolation overspreads the country—Ravaged by the Saracens, the Crusaders, and the Turks—Present state of the country—No roads nor inns for travellers—Misery of the inhabitants—Fulfilment of Scriptures.

JUDEA, in modern language, includes not only the province allotted to the tribe of Judah, of which the capital was Jerusalem, but the whole land of Israel, or Canaan. This country was so exceedingly fertile, that it was promised and described in Scripture as "a land flowing with milk and honey," Exod. iii. 8, 17. Its productiveness was known far beyond the boundaries of Syria; and it was ranked among their finest provinces by the Greeks and Romans.

Ancient authors of the highest credit bear the most satisfactory testimony to the great number of the towns and villages which it contained; the salubrity of its climate, the richness of its soil, and the abundance and excellency of its fruits, which even surpassed those of Italy. Cultivation of the land was carried to so high a degree of perfection, that the Greek, whose country was fertile and beautiful, proverbially called Syria "a garden," including in their commendation the provinces on both sides of the river Jordon.

Moses, however, foresaw, by the Spirit of prophecy, the future deplorable condition of Canaan; and he delivered thus the Divine determination:—"I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass. And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield her fruits. And I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies who dwell therein shall be astonished at it," Lev. xxvi. 19–20, 32.

Isaiah, by the same divine influence, predicted: "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire; your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. The land shall be utterly emptied and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left," Isa. i. 7; xxiv. 3–5, 6.

Jeremiah wrote, from JEHOVAH, "I have forsaken mine house, I have left mine heritage; I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies. They have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart," Jer. xii. 7–11. Ezekiel also added, confirming the declarations of his brethren: "And the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall be desolate, and ye shall know that I am the LORD," Ezek. xii. 20.

Illumined by celestial light, the vision of the prophets of GOD relating to many things future was as clear as the eyesight of the most intelligent who now read the history of Palestine, or survey the face of that country; while the numerous vestiges of ancient cultivation, the splendid ruins everywhere abounding, the remains of numerous Romam buildings and public highways, together with the natural richness of the soil evidently in many places not yet deteriora-

ted, agree with the voice of history, in attesting the ancient prosperity as contrasted with the melancholy and altered condition of the country. Judea having been possessed by the Israelites for many centuries, the Chaldeans, the Persians, the Egyptians, the Syrians, and the Romans, were the "strangers," who with their ravaging armies, brought destruction upon destruction, preparing the way for more savage desolators.

Before the middle of the seventh century, the false prophet Mohammed, seized, or rather laid waste, the principal parts of the country. From that period the Saracens held it for several centuries; but it was torn by the civil wars of the Fatimites and the Ommiades; wrested from the oppressive caliphs by their rebellious governors, and taken from them by the Seljukian Turks. In the twelfth century, Jerusalem was taken by the Crusaders from Europe, and for about eighty years the country was drenched with the blood of Saracens and professing Christians. In 1187, Judea was taken by Saladin, the great sultan of Egypt, on the decline of whose kingdom it passed through various revolutions, until at length it was swallowed up in the empire of the Ottoman Turks!

Judea's "cities" have been "laid waste;" and the "Holy Land" may with perfect propriety be denominated "a field of ruins," as is testified by the united report of travellers. Columns buried in rubbish are to be seen in many parts of the country: Bethsaida, Capernaum, Cesarea, Chorazin, Gadara, and many other towns and cities mentioned in the Bible, exist no longer except in shapeless mounds of rubbish, illustrating the inspiration of the prophecy.

Extensively "the land is desolate:" the whole country is in disorder; and security for life and property is unknown among the various rebel tribes. The Arabs rove over the plains of Palestine, pasturing their flocks where they choose to pitch their tents, and the most fertile lands of the country lie untilled. Agriculture is but little pursued by the miserable inhabitants, and the wretched husbandmen sow their seed carrying arms for their own defence. Such a state of things can scarcely be conceived by the civilized people of Europe.

Intercommunication is extremely difficult in Judea. There are no public roads in the interior parts of the country, except the remains of once-frequented highways, now no longer passable, and those over the mountains are scarcely to be passed. There are no canals in this country, nor even bridges over the rivers and torrents, though these conveniences are particularly necessary in winter. There are no inns for the accommodation of travellers in any part of the country; nor public conveyances; and a wagon or cart is not to be found in the whole of Syria. These statements, in agreement with the inspired oracles, are made by different and most respectable travellers, who bear their united testimony to the perfect accomplishment of the Divine predictions, written *three thousand three hundred* years ago by Moses, and at the distance of *two thousand five hundred* years by the prophet Isaiah.

These things, relating to cities formerly populous, and to extensively cultivated plains, so remarkable in the once favored and flourishing country of Judea, afford the clearest demonstration to the observant traveller, and to the intelligent reader, of the inspiration of the sacred writers. and of the divinity of the Holy Scriptures

CHAPTER V.

IDUMEA.

Idumea or Edom, the country of Esau in Arabia Petrea—Idolatry and cruelty of the Edomites—Predictions of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Obadiah, Ezekiel, and Malachi—Desolation of Idumea testified by travellers—the ruins of Petra—mausoleums and sepulchres—all confirm the Scriptures.

IDUMEA, as the country of Edom was called by the Greeks and Romans, was a district lying south of the Dead Sea, on the borders of Moab. Judg. xi. 17; it was a strip of land considerably elevated, between the desert of Sin on the west, and Arabia Petrea on the east. The climate was delightful; and the country was remarkable for the richness of its soil; it derives its name from Esau or Edom, Gen. xxxvi. 43, whose posterity settled in it, expelling the ancient Horites. Deut. ii. 12. They cherished the enmity of their father Esau against his brother Jacob, and though equally descended from the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac, they continued the determined enemies of their brethren the Israelites. They united with King Nebuchadnezzar when he besieged Jerusalem, and urged him to "rase it, even to the foundation thereof." Psalms cxxxvii. 7.

Idolatry, cruelty, and various wickedness, distinguished the Edomites, who were among the most rancorous enemies of the people of GOD: his prophets were therefore inspired to record the Divine judgment against that guilty people. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Obadiah, Ezekiel, and Malachi, have written as follows concerning Idumea.

"For my sword shall be bathed in heaven; behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.—For the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech-owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest: they shall possess it for ever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein." Isa. xxxiv. 5, 17.

"Concerning Edom, thus saith the LORD of hosts, Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished? Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan; for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time that I will visit him. For I have sworn by myself, saith the LORD, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes. Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD. Also Edom shall be a desolation, every one that goeth by it, shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbor cities thereof, saith the LORD, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it." Jer. xlix. 7–18.

"How are the things of Esau searched out! how are his hidden things sought up! Shall I not in that day, saith the LORD, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau? And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of

Esau may be cut off by slaughter. For thy violence against thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever." Obad. ver. 6–10.

"Thus saith the LORD GOD, Behold, O mount Seir, I am against thee, and I will stretch out my hand against thee, and I will make thee most desolate. I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt know that I am the LORD. Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time that their calamity had an end: therefore as I live, saith the LORD GOD, I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood shall pursue thee: since thou hast not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee. As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee: thou shalt be desolate, O mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it; and they shall know that I am the LORD." Ezek. xxxv. 3–15.

Idumea has been desolate for many generations; and it exhibits the most remarkable monuments in the ruins of ancient buildings. An intelligent modern traveller states: "From the reports of the Arabs of Bakir, and from the inhabitants of Gaza, who frequently go to Maan (or Teman) and Karak, on the road of the pilgrims, there are, within three days' journey to the southeast of the Dead Sea, upwards of thirty ruined towns absolutely deserted. The Arabs, in general, avoid them, on account of the scorpions with which they swarm. We cannot be surprised at these traces of ancient population, when we recollect that this was the country of the Nabatheans, the most powerful of the Arabs, and of the Idumeans, who, at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, were almost as numerous as the Jews." These ruins of cities, however, are not the only monuments of the former greatness of Edom. Its southern capital city, Petra or Sela, now without an inhabitant, except the wild animals foretold by the prophet a thousand years before it ceased to be tenanted by men, presents one of the most astonishing scenes that it is possible to imagine. In the vicinity of mount Seir, extensive ruins of a large city, vast heaps of hewn stones, foundations of buildings, fragments of columns, and vestiges of paved streets, are spread over a valley which is enclosed on each side by perpendicular cliffs, varying from *four hundred to seven hundred* feet in height, hollowed out into innumerable chambers of different dimensions, and rising in the cliffs, tier above tier; the uppermost appearing beyond the possibility of human habitation. Columns also rise above columns, adorning the fronts of the dwellings: horizontal grooves, for the conveyance of water, run along the face of the cliffs: flights of steps formed the means of ascent to the habitations, and the summit of the heights in various places, is covered with pyramids cut out of the rock. The identity of the scene, as described by the prophet Jeremiah, in all the "terribleness" of the human power which pertained to it, and as depicted in the rightful aspect which it now exhibits, is such as cannot be mistaken by any observer, possessing the prophetical writings.

Mausoleums and sepulchres are very numerous and magnificent in these ruins: they are of various periods of their sculpture, and of different orders of architecture. One of them particularly is described as a work of prodigious labor and of colossal magnitude, in perfect preservation, containing a chamber sixteen paces square, and about twenty-five feet high, crowned with a pediment highly ornamented, and all cut out of the solid rock, designed, it is probable, for the mortal remains of its rulers.

These splendid monuments, dedicated to the memory of its chiefs and princes, demonstrate to modern ages the opulence of the city. They afford also instructive moral lessons to all succeeding ages. Deistical free-thinkers might be admonished by the fate of the enemies of the ancient church of GOD, as they

have been cut off according to the word of the LORD by his prophets; and as their very land, especially that of the Idumeans, for their violence against their brethren of Israel, has been wasted with a curse, which cleaves to it even to this day, designed as an evidence of Divine Revelation.

CHAPTER VI.

EGYPT.

Egypt, an ancient nation, celebrated for its advancement in the arts and sciences—Its vast population and numerous cities—Pyramids of Egypt—Ruins of Thebes—Injuries of Israel by the Egyptians—Predictions of Ezekiel—their fulfilment in the decline and desolation of Egypt under the Babylonians, Persians, Macedonians, Syrians, Romans, Mamelukes, and Turks.

EGYPT is famous as one of the most ancient kingdoms in the world, and its history is one of the most interesting of any country upon earth. Many regard it as the birth-place of the arts and sciences, and all admit that they were patronised there at a very remote period, so that its wise men were celebrated for cultivating every kind of knowledge which distinguished the sages of antiquity. Egypt was, therefore, celebrated among the nations for its wisdom, and its mythology and priesthood were no less famed: yet, at a very early period, its priests instructed its people in the most degrading idolatries. Debased by superstition, they carried these criminal follies to a greater height than the people of any other country, paying divine honors to the sun, moon, and stars, to men and brute animals, to plants and reptiles, and even to the most despicable insects, as their deities!

Egypt was famed for its vast population, its numerous cities, and the greatness of its wealth; and what is recorded in history regarding its public buildings would exceed all credibility, were it not in a high degree confirmed by their prodigious remains, which exist at this day, to the astonishment of all Europe. Egypt is a field of research to learned antiquaries: surveying the ruins of ancient magnificence, the traveller overlooks the present period, in contemplating remote generations; and among the degenerate existing population, he looks in vain for the genuine descendants of the ancient inhabitants, the authors of these mighty and enduring works.

Among the wonders of the world in modern times, we always find reckoned the "Pyramids of Egypt." Many of them are found in different parts of the country; but three of these astonishing edifices are most frequently mentioned, as standing at Djiza, about eleven miles west of the Nile, and about fifteen miles from the city of Grand Cairo, where stood the city of Memphis, or Noph, Isa. xix. 13, Ezek. xxx. 13. The largest of these enormous edifices is built of hewn stones, many of which are thirty feet long. An eminent French engineer has calculated that the stones in this vast pile called the "Great Pyramid," amount to six millions of tons; and that they would be sufficient to build a wall round the whole of France, measuring about eighteen hundred miles, one foot thick and ten feet high. This mountain of a building forms a square, each side of which is about seven hundred and forty-six feet, and covers nearly fourteen acres of land: it is, therefore, about equal to the square called Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, in London. Its perpendicular height is about five hundred and sixty feet, or one hundred and seventeen feet higher than St. Paul's Cathedral, in London. Viewed from the ground, the summit of this pyramid appears to the beholder only a point; but it is found, by those who ascend it, to be a kind of platform measuring thirty-two feet square, as stated by Dr. Clarke.

These stupendous monuments of human art appear to have been designed as the tombs for the kings of Egypt. From these, therefore, and from the equally wonderful ruins of Thebes, "the populous No," as called by the prophets, Nah. iii. 8, Jer. xlvi. 25, "the city with an hundred gates," as mentioned by Homer, as they are still found at the villages of Karnac and Luxor, we may infer the grandeur and resources of the ancient Egyptians.

Egypt, with idolatries and wickedness, had for ages been a snare to the Israelites, and many of their miseries as a nation arose from that country. The Egyptians had drawn king Zedekiah into rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar; and after having formed a confederacy with him, they treacherously left him to perish in the war with the Chaldeans, who destroyed Jerusalem. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 3–13, Ezek. xvii. 15–17. Herodotus states that "Apries," or Pharaoh Hophra, Jer. xliv. 30, proudly boasted of having so securely established his kingdom, that it was not even in the power of GOD to dethrone him! *Euterpe*, clxix. The prophet of GOD, therefore, wrote:—

"Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and prophecy against him, and against all Egypt: speak, and say, Thus saith the LORD GOD, Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself. But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales. And I will leave thee thrown into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers: thou shalt fall upon the open fields; thou shalt not be brought together nor gathered: I have given thee for meat to the beasts of the field and to the fowls of the heaven. And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the LORD, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel. And the land of Egypt shall be desolate and waste; and they shall know that I am the LORD; because he hath said, The river is mine, and I have made it. Behold, therefore, I am against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia. And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years: and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries. Yet thus saith the LORD GOD, I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and I will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation; and they shall be there a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations. And it shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel, which bringeth their iniquity to remembrance, when they shall look after them; but they shall know that I am the LORD. Thus saith the LORD GOD, I will also destroy their idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt: and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt. Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt, and they shall know that I am the LORD." Ezek. xxix. 2–5, 9, 10, 12, 14–16; xxx. 13, 19.

Divine Providence has accomplished the fulfilment of these prophetic denunciations with fearful particularity in Egypt. The country abounds with the relics of ancient magnificence in heaps of rubbish and mighty ruins. Those stupendous temples, abounding with massy and lofty columns, are profusely covered with hieroglyphic characters: but though they were erected to the honor of false divinities, by mortals who had "changed the glory of the uncorruptible GOD into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things," Rom. i. 23; they are evidently destined

in their desolations, to reflect homage to JEHOVAH, as the only living and true GOD, illustrating at the same time the historical and prophetical truth of the Holy Scriptures.

Two thousand three hundred years ago, Egypt was deprived of her Pharaohs, and her natural proprietors; and her fertile plains have fallen a prey to the Persians, the Macedonians, the Syrians, the Romans, the Greeks, and the Saracens under Omar, A. D. 640; when they established the Manommedan imposture which has prevailed ever since, as the religion of the Egyptians. About A. D. 970, the Moslem caliph of Syene wrested it from the caliph of Bagdad; and he and his descendants governed it 200 years. About A. D. 1171, Saladin, the Kurd, craftily seized it; and he and his posterity governed it for 80 years. It was next ruled by the Mamelukes, or slave-usurpers, for 275 years; and in 1525, it was annexed to the Ottoman empire, of which it still nominally forms a part, governed by a pacha and twenty-four begs or chiefs. Through these successive periods there has "not been a prince of the land of Egypt;" the pachas have been strangers and oppressors. Everything reminds the traveller that he is in a country of slavery and tyranny: as there is no middle class of the community,—neither nobility, clergy, merchants, nor landholders. Thus has Egypt been "the basest of kingdoms," and "has not been governed by a prince of the land of Egypt," for upwards of 2000 years. Having been successively under the dominion of the Babylonians, Persians, Macedonians, Syrians, Romans, Mamelukes, slaves, and Turks, to whom it remains in abject servitude to this day; it has continued a most "base," or tributary kingdom, a standing memorial of the inspiration of the word of GOD.

CHAPTER VII.

NINEVEH.

Magnitude of Nineveh the capital of Assyria—Nineveh flourished by the ruin of surrounding states—The overthrow of the Israelites by Shalmanezer—Jonah's ministry at Nineveh—Nahum predicts the destruction of Nineveh—Its king slew himself and family, by the conflagration of his palace and his treasure—Present desolation of Nineveh—Remarks of Bishop Newton.

NINEVEH, the capital city of the ancient Assyrian empire, was situated on the eastern bank of the river Tigris, about 280 miles north of Babylon, and 400 miles north-east of Damascus. It was one of the most ancient cities upon earth; being founded by Ashur or by Nimrod, both grandsons of Noah. According to Diodorus Siculus, this city was an oblong parallelogram, extending 150 furlongs in length, 90 furlongs in breadth, and 480 in compass. This agrees with the account given by the prophet, that it was "an exceeding great city of three days' journey" (Jonah iii. 3,) in circuit; reckoning 20 miles a day, as the common computation for a traveller on foot. This vast city was surrounded with prodigious walls, 100 feet high; and so broad that three chariots could drive abreast on them: the whole extent was defended by 1500 towers, 200 feet high, or double the height of the walls. The population of Nineveh is supposed to have been at the least 600,000 souls, in the time of the prophet Jonah, Jonah, iv. 11.

Nineveh had risen to its splendor and magnificence on the ruins of the surrounding states, under a succession of ambitious and martial princes, who had reduced into subjection to Assyria the greater portion of that division of Asia. Success having attended their various military enterprises, both rulers and their people became intoxicated with pride, and, under the influence of superstition

and idolatry, cruelty marked their progress in every country, and oppression characterized their government over the vanquished nations. Shalmanezer conquered Samaria and destroyed the corrupted kingdom of Israel, 2 Kings xvii.; and the Assyrian army, under the king of Sennacherib, purposed the same concerning Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah; his mighty warriors, however, perished in their camp near the holy city, one hundred and eighty-five thousand of them being smitten during one night by a commissioned angel of the LORD.

Jonah had executed his commission in preaching repentance to the Ninevites; and the king, with his numerous subjects, humbled himself before GOD: but they soon returned to their former wickedness; and other inspired prophets were directed to declare the Divine judgments against that proud metropolis of Assyria.

Nahum, the prophet of GOD, wrote:—"The burden of Nineveh. GOD is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious: the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked. But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies. For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry. And the LORD hath given a commandment concerning thee, that no more thy name be sown: out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image, and the molten image; I will make thy grave; for thou art vile. The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved. Nineveh is of old like a pool of water; yet they shall flee away. Stand, stand, shall they cry; but none shall look back. Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold; for there is none end of the store and glory out of all the pleasant furniture. Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and robbery; the prey departeth not. And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee? Behold, thy people in the midst of thee are women; the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies; the fire shall devour thy bars. Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria, thy nobles shall dwell in the dust; thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them. There is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous; all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?" Nahum i. 1-3, 8, 10, 14; ii. 6, 8, 9; iii. 1, 7, 13, 18, 19.

Zephaniah succeeded Nahum, and wrote:—"The LORD will be terrible unto them: for he will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen. And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness. And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it: their voice shall sing in the windows, desolation shall be in the thresholds: for he shall uncover the cedar-work. This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly; that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss and wag his hand." Zeph. ii. 11, 13-15.

Agreeably to the declarations of the inspired prophet, Nineveh was taken and ruined by Assuerus, or Cyaxares, king of Media, and Nebuchonosor, or Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, B.C. 606, or 612. At the approach of destruc

tion, as declared by the prophet, the city was drunken, Nahum iii. 11; and Diodorus, with others, ascribes the taking of it to Arbaces the Mede, and Belesis the Babylonian, stating: "While all the Assyrian army were feasting for their former victories, those about Arbaces being informed by some deserters of their negligence and drunkenness in the camp, fell upon them unexpectedly by night, slew many of their soldiers and drove the rest into the city." Nahum also predicts that her shepherds and nobles would desert her, iii. 18; that is, the rulers and tributary princes, who, as Herodotus states, deserted Nineveh in her distress, and came not to her assistance. Diodorus also states, that when the enemy shut up the king in the city, many nations revolted; going over to the besiegers for the sake of their liberty; that the king despatched messengers to all his subjects, requiring them to succor him and that, supposing himself able to endure the siege, he remained in expecta tion of armies being raised throughout his empire, relying on an ancient oracle, handed down from their fathers, that Nineveh would not be taken till the river became the enemy of the city. In the third year of the siege, the Tigris being swollen with continued rains, overflowed part of the city, and threw down twenty furlongs of the wall, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Nahum, ii. 6, that "the gates of the river should be opened." The king then perceiving, in this calamity, that the river had manifestly become an enemy to the city, threw aside all hope of safety, and dreading his falling into the hands of his enemies, he erected a large funeral pyre within his own palace; and having collected together all his gold and silver and royal vestments, with his numerous concubines and eunuchs, seated himself with them in a small apartment in the midst, and burnt them all together with himself and his magnificent palace. Certain deserters soon reported the conflagration with the death of the king, and the besiegers entered at the breach made by the waters. Having thus taken the city, the historian states, the conquerors dispersed the citizens in the villages, levelled the city with the ground, transferred the gold and silver, of which there were many talents found, to Ectabana, the metropolis of the Medes, and thus subverted the empire of the Assyrians; and Nineveh became empty, void, and waste. ii. 10.

Ancient and modern writers unanimously attest the utter desolation of Nineveh thus commenced. "But what probability was there," as bishop Newton justly asks, "that the capital of a great kingdom, a city which was sixty miles in compass, a city which contained so many thousand inhabitants, a city which had walls—that such a city should be totally destroyed? and yet so totally was it destroyed, that the place is hardly known where it was situated!

"We have seen that it was taken and destroyed by the Medes and Babylonians; and what we may suppose helped to complete its ruin and devastation was Nebuchadnezzar's soon after enlarging and beautifying Babylon. From that time no mention is made of Nineveh by any of the sacred writers; and the most ancient of the heathen authors, who have occasion to say any thing about it, speak of it as a city that was once great and flourishing, but now destroyed and desolate. Great as it was formerly, so little of it was remaining, that authors are not agreed even about its situation. The learned Bochart hath shown that Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, and Ammianus Marcellinus, all three speak differently of it, sometimes as if it was situated upon the river Tigris, and sometimes as if it was situated upon the river Euphrates. So that, to reconcile these authors with themselves and with others, it is supposed by Bochart that there were three; the Syrian upon the river Euphrates, the Assyrian upon the river Tigris, and a third built afterwards upon the Tigris by the Persians, who succeeded the Parthians in the empire of the East in the third

century, and were subdued by the Saracens in the seventh century after CHRIST; but whether this later Nineveh was built in the same place as old Nineveh is a question that cannot be decided. Lucian, who flourished in the second century after CHRIST, affirms that Nineveh was utterly perished, and there was no footstep of it remaining, nor could you tell where once it was situated: and the greater regard is to be paid to Lucian's testimony, as he was a native of Samosata, a city upon the Euphrates. There is at this time a city called MOSUL, situate upon the western side of the river Tigris, and on the opposite eastern shore are ruins of a great extent, which are said to be the ruins of Nineveh. But it is more than probable that these ruins are the remains of the Persian Nineveh, and not of the Assyrian. *Ipsæ perire ruinæ;* even the ruins of Nineveh have been, as I may say, long ago ruined and destroyed. Such an utter end hath been made of it; and such is the truth of the Divine predictions!"

CHAPTER VIII.

BABYLON.

Origin of Babylon—Magnitude of the city—Wonderful walls, palaces, temple, and gardens—Golden idols in the temple—Riches of Babylon—Predictions against Babylon by Isaiah and Jeremiah—Siege of Babylon by Cyrus—His conquest of the city, and capture of its treasures—Babylon declined—Its idols seized by Xerxes—Selucia—Ctesiphon—Chaldea—made desolate—its desolation described by Benjamin of Tudela—by modern travellers—by Dr. Rauwolf—by recent travellers—Birs Nemroud, or Temple of Belus—Reflections on the fulfilment of Scripture.

BABYLON, the chief or mother city of Chaldea, was one of the most celebrated cities of antiquity, seated on the great river Euphrates. It was the capital of an ancient kingdom which originated with the tower of Babel, founded soon after the deluge, and enlarged by Nimrod, a great-grand-son of Noah, about two thousand years before the birth of JESUS CHRIST. Additions were made to it from age to age, especially by queen Semiramis, and it was greatly enlarged and beautified by various succeeding sovereigns; but king Nebuchadnezzar and his daughter Nitocris brought it to such a pitch of magnificence and splendor as rendered it one of the wonders of the ancient world.

Babylon stood in the midst of an extensive plain, in a very deep and most exceedingly fruitful soil: it was divided into two parts, east and west, by the river Euphrates, which flowed through the city, from the north to the south. These divisions were enclosed by an immense wall, and the whole formed a complete square 480 furlongs, or 60 miles in compass. The walls of Babylon were of extraordinary strength, being, as it is said, 300 feet high, and 87 feet broad, with towers for defence, and capable of admitting six chariots abreast to run upon them. This magnificent city had 50 principal streets, 25 from each side, and each 15 miles long, traversing the whole area, from gate to gate, intersecting each other, thus forming the whole into 625 squares. On each side of the river Euphrates there was built a quay, and a high wall, of the same thickness as the walls around the city. The entrances to the city were at the ends of the fifty chief streets, by one hundred gates of immense size constructed of solid brass; and the two parts of the city were connected by a grand stone bridge thrown across the river. To prevent inconvenience from the swellings of the river, two vast canals were cut at some distance above the city, and by these the superabundant waters were, in time of flood, carried off into the river Tigris. Besides these canals, prodigious embankments were

raised, so as effectually to confine the stream within its proper channel, and to serve as a security against an inundation of the city. These stupendous works were formed of bricks, made principally from the clay found on the western side of Babylon, where an immense lake was dug, the depth of which was thirty-five feet, and its circumference forty-five miles.

Babylon being divided into two parts by the Euphrates, was connected not only by the bridge, but by a subterraneous communication, through a tunnel under the bed of the river. The old palace erected on the eastern side, was about thirty furlongs in compass, surrounded by three separate walls one within another. The new palace, built on the opposite side, was about four times as large as the other, and it is said to have been eight miles in circumference. Within this were the famous "hanging gardens:" they consisted of vast terraces, elevated one above another, till the highest equalled the city walls. They were designed to represent a woody country, having large trees planted on them, in soil of sufficient depth for them to grow fifty feet high. On the highest level was a reservoir, with a machine by which water was drawn from the river and applied by aqueducts to water the whole garden. This novel and astonishing contrivance of an artificial mountain was constructed by king Nebuchadnezzar, for the purpose of gratifying his queen Amytis, daughter of king Astyages of Media, that she might behold something resembling the hills and woodlands of her native country, and not grow weary with the flat plains of Babylonia.

Near to the old palace in Babylon stood the celebrated temple of Belus or Jupiter, which, with its various buildings, formed a square of nearly three miles in compass. In the middle of the temple was an immense tower, six hundred feet in height, supposed to have been the ancient tower of Babel. This prodigious pile of building was square, measuring a furlong on each side, and consisted of eight towers, one above another, each seventy-five feet high, and which were ascended by a sort of road round the outside of sufficient width to allow a carriage to pass by the stairs. Within this temple of Belus, or, as some say, on its summit, was placed a golden image, forty feet in heigth, and equal in value to three and a half millions of pounds sterling. Besides this golden divinity, there were such multitudes of other statues and of sacred utensils, that the whole of the treasure contained in this single edifice has been computed to be worth $210,000,000.

These costly things displayed the prodigious wealth and power of the Babylonian empire; and it must be acknowledged that they were among the mightiest works of mortals. Babylon was therefore called, "The glory of kingdoms," "The golden city," "The lady of kingdoms," and "The praise of the whole earth:" but its splendid and celebrated buildings had been erected with the spoils of conquered nations, and by the blood of many thousands. Pride, cruelty, and oppression, characterized the Chaldeans of Babylon, and their abominable idolatries and various wickedness have therefore been visited in the utter desolation of this "crowning city," agreeably to the inspired predictions of the holy prophets of God. Those commissioned servants of the Most High wrote:—

"The burden of Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate, and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces, and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the

Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when GOD overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherd's make their fold there: but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the island shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged," Isa. xiii. 1–9, 17–19, 22.

"Thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased; the golden city ceased!—Hell from beneath is moved for thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and shall say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of GOD: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the MOST HIGH. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch!—Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts." xiv. 4–9, 10–12, 17–19, 21–23.

"Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayst know that I the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the GOD of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name. I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts." xlv. 1–4, 10–13. "Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth; their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; they would not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity." xlvi. 1, 2.

Jeremiah wrote:—"The word that the LORD spake against Babylon, and against the land of the Chaldeans, by Jeremiah the prophet. Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans. For lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon, an assembly of great nations from the

north country, and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain. And Chaldea shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the LORD. Because of the wrath of the LORD it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate: every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues. Israel is a scattered sheep, the lions have driven him away; first the king of Assyria hath devoured him, and last this Nebuchadnezzar hath broken his bones. Therefore, thus saith the LORD of hosts, the GOD of Israel, Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria. A sword is upon the Chaldeans, saith the LORD, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wise men. A drought is upon her waters, and they shall be dried up; for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols." Jer. l. 1–3, 8–10, 13, 18, 35–38.

"Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity: for this is the time of the LORD's vengeance, he will render unto her a recompense. Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine, therefore the nations are mad. Make bright the arrows: gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it, because it is the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of the temple. Prepare against her the nations, with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion. And the land shall tremble and sorrow, for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant. The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight, they have remained in their holds: their might hath failed; they became as women; they have burnt their dwelling-places; her bars are broken. One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end. The violence done to me and to my flesh be upon Babylon, shall the inhabitant of Zion say; and, My blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high places shall be burnt with fire; and the people shall labor in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary. So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, even all these words that are written against Babylon," li. 6, 7–11, 28–31, 35, 58–60.

These divine predictions are most remarkable; describing the combination of many nations against Babylon, and their various military preparations and progress, under their famous commander Cyrus, the Persian prince, who commanded the allied armies of his uncle Darius, king of the Medes. The particulars of this celebrated siege and conquest of Babylon are recorded by two Greek historians of the highest reputation, Herodotus and Xenophon. These relate that Cyrus was a prince of extraordinary endowments, and that he was educated and disciplined for military life with the utmost care, as if he were destined to accomplish the purposes of GOD, declared by the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah. They relate that Cyrus, with a powerful army of Medes, Persians, and allies from all the surrounding nations, whom he had conquered, besieged the mighty Babylon; that the Chaldeans, after losing a battle or two, could not be provoked by the besiegers to hazard a general engagement in the plain, but treated them with scorn, conceiving that their "broad walls" were impregnable, and that they were perfectly secure, as their city was furnished with provisions for twenty years, besides what could be raised from the void ground within the

walls, that Cyrus contrived a fatal snare for the Babylonians, by turning the course of the river Euphrates from the city through the great lake; that the waters being thus drawn off from the bed of the river, a large body of the soldiers marched in the channel up to the bridge; that some of the gates leading from the river were left open by the carelessness of the guards; that the troops of Cyrus, entering the city by this means, took Babylon during the night of an idolatrous festival, Dan. v.; that its princes, nobles, and captains, being intoxicated with their debauch at the feast, were immediately slaughtered; and that this glorious "virgin" city, never before conquered, was thus taken by the besiegers before the king was informed of his danger, till the "posts and messengers" ran with the dreadful tidings, which he had scarcely received, before himself with his attendants, and multitudes of the most honorable Babylonians, were slain by the conquering Medes. Cyrus gathered thus, as the prophet foretold, "treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places," to a vast amount; for the gold and silver which he collected in this conquest is estimated at $631,210,000, chiefly from Sardis and Babylon.

Babylon having been thus taken by Cyrus, in the name of his uncle Darius, its best houses were granted to the captains in the army; but the city began soon to decline, as the Persian monarchs did not choose to make it the residence of their court, which they kept at Shushan in Persia, Est. i. 2; Dan. viii. 2. Cyrus ordered its lofty walls to be taken down, or reduced to only a quarter of their original height; and thus degraded, it became a tributary city, whose population rapidly decreased; instead of its holding the proud rank of being the 'lady of kingdoms," or mistress of the whole East. Xerxes, a successor of Cyrus on the throne of Persia, after his ignominious retreat from Europe, B. C. 479, plundered and destroyed the idol temples with their senseless divinities, seizing their sacred treasures to cover the expenses of his armament in the invasion of Greece. The weight of these in gold amounted to 400,000 pounds. Ptolemy Euergetes having extended his conquests beyond the Euphrates, took with him from the conquered provinces, on his sudden recall and hasty return into Egypt, 2,500 idols, some of which Cambyses the son of Cyrus, who reigned at Babylon, had previously taken from the Egyptians. When many of the Babylonians also were removed to the newly-founded city Seleucia, by which their own was exhausted; and when many of them, at a later period, were commanded with their families to emigrate to Media, their "household gods," forming no small portion of their luggage, would contribute to burden them on their unwilling journeys: and when their temples were finally destroyed by fire, many of their senseless divinities were carried away by the idolatrous Babylonians, condemned to perpetual slavery and banishment, in their wearisome pilgrimage to the remote regions of their equally superstitious enemies. Thus, therefore, the inspired prediction was fulfilled: "*Their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast.*"

Alexander the Great attempted to restore the former glory of Babylon, designing to make it the metropolis of his empire. The river having turned out of its course by Cyrus, never returned to its proper channel through the city, one side of which, with the adjacent country, was frequently flooded and became uninhabitable. He employed, therefore, ten thousand men in repairing the embankments of the Euphrates and the temple of Belus; but the premature death of that ambitious conqueror occasioned the abandonment of the work, and the vast preparations made for the undertaking rather contributed to increase the desolation. About one hundred and thirty years before the Christian era, Hunnerus, a Parthian conqueror, destroyed the fairest remaining part of Babylon.

Successive sovereigns built several new cities in those regions, especially Seleucia, on the Tigris, called New Babylon, with the view of immortalizing their own names, and by this policy they entirely drew away the population of the old city. Thus this haughty "lady of kingdoms," whose riches and power had been increased by her triumph over Jerusalem, gradually declined for several centuries, and sunk into her doomed poverty and desolation. For although Cyrus had resided chiefly at Babylon, and endeavored to reform the government and improve the manners of the Babylonians, his successors on the Persian throne preferred, as the seat of their empire, Susa, Persepolis, or Ecbatana, cities of Persia. In like manner also the successors of Alexander the Great declined prosecuting his plans for restoring the pre-eminence and glory of Babylon; but after the subdivision of his mighty empire, even the kings of Assyria, during their temporary residence in Chaldea, neglected that fallen metropolis, and dwelt in Seleucia. And thus the residents, who had been brought from foreign provinces, Persians and Medes, and afterwards Greeks, following the example of their sovereigns, in deserting Babylon, acted as if they had said in the language of the prophet—"*Forsake her, and let us go every man unto his own country; for her judgment is reached unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies!*"

Chaldea generally, as well as "Babylon the glory of the excellency" of that land, was doomed to desolation; and a few remarks from the historian Gibbon will strikingly illustrate the terrible ravages of succeeding conquerors, and further show the dreadful manner in which the prophetic declarations were fulfilled, regarding Babylon and her "daughter cities:"—

"Seleucia, on the western bank of the Tigris, about forty-five miles to the north of ancient Babylon, was the capital of the Macedonian conquests in Upper Asia. Many ages after the fall of their empire, Seleucia retained the genuine characters of a Grecian colony, arts, military virtue, and the love of freedom. The independent republic was governed by a senate of 300 nobles; the people consisted of 600,000 citizens; the walls were strong, and as long as concord prevailed among the several orders of the state, they viewed with contempt the power of the Parthians, but the madness of faction was sometimes provoked to implore the dangerous aid of the common enemy, who was posted almost at the gates of the colony. The Parthian monarchs, like the Mogul sovereigns of Hindostan, delighted in the pastoral life of their Scythian ancestors, and the imperial camp was frequently pitched in the plain of Ctesiphon, on the eastern bank of the Tigris, at the distance of only three miles from Seleucia. The innumerable attendants on luxury and despotism resorted to the court, and the little village of Ctesiphon insensibly swelled into a great city. Under the reign of Marcus, the Roman generals penetrated as far as Ctesiphon and Seleucia. They were received as friends by the Greek colony: they attacked as enemies the seat of the Parthian kings, yet both cities experienced the same treatment. The sack and conflagration of Seleucia, with the massacre of *three hundred thousand* of the inhabitants, tarnished the glory of the Roman triumph. Seleucia, already exhausted by the neighborhood of a powerful rival, sunk under the fatal blow; but Ctesiphon, in about thirty-three years, had sufficiently recovered its strength to maintain an obstinate siege against the emperor Severus. The city was, however, taken by assault, the king, who defended it in person, escaped with precipitation; a *hundred thousand* captives, and a rich booty, rewarded the fatigues of the Roman soldiers. Notwithstanding these misfortunes, Ctesiphon succeeded to Babylon and to Seleucia, as one of the great capitals of the East. In summer the monarch of Persia enjoyed at Ectabana the cool

breezes of the mountains of Media; but the mildness of the climate engaged him to prefer Ctesiphon for his winter residence."

Roman power and cruelty continued to desolate the fair regions of Chaldea; and equal miseries attended succeeding conquerors of that wealthy country. Gibbon gives the following description of the taking of Ctesiphon by the Saracens, which contributed greatly to make "the cities of Babylon a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness:"—

"Saiad, the lieutenant of Omar, passed the Tigris without opposition, the capital was taken by assault, and the disorderly resistance of the people gave a keener edge to the *sabres* of the Moslems, who shouted with religious transport, '*This is the white palace of Chosroes, this is the promise of the apostle of* GOD!' The naked robbers of the desert were suddenly enriched beyond the measure of their hope or knowledge. Each chamber revealed a new treasure, secreted with art, or ostentatiously displayed; the gold and silver, the various wardrobes and precious furniture, surpassed (says Abulfeda) the estimate of fancy or numbers: and another historian defines the untold and almost infinite mass by the fabulous computation of *three thousands of thousands of thousands* of pieces of gold.—One of the apartments of the palace was decorated with a carpet of silk, sixty cubits in length and as many in breadth: a paradise, or garden, was depictured on the ground, the flowers, fruits, and shrubs, were imitated by the figures of the gold embroidery, and the colors of the precious stones, and the ample square was encircled by a variegated and verdant border. The Arabian general persuaded his soldiers to relinquish their claim, in the reasonable hope that the eyes of the caliph would be delighted with the splendid workmanship of nature and industry. Regardless of the merit of art and the pomp of royalty, the rigid Omar divided his prize among his brethren of Medina: the picture was destroyed, but such was the intrinsic value of the materials, that the share of Ali alone was sold for *twenty thousand* drachms. A mule that carried away the tiara and curiass, the belt and bracelets of Chosroes, was overtaken by the pursuers; the gorgeous trophy was presented to the commander of the faithful, and the gravest of the companions condescended to smile when they beheld the white beard, hairy arms, and uncouth figure of the veteran, who was invested with the spoil of the great king! The sack of Ctesiphon was followed by its desertion and gradual decay; as the Saracens disliked the air and situation of the place, and Omar was advised by his general to remove the seat of government to the western side of the Euphrates." Oriental despotism and caprice effected thus the dreadful desolation of Chaldea, as foretold by the prophets of GOD.

Babylon, after the commencement of the Christian era, was but very thinly peopled; and, within its walls, wide spaces were brought under cultivation: but it continued to decline, and its desolations to increase, as the country around was subject to inundations. In the fourth century, its remaining walls formed a sort of inclosure for the preservation of wild beasts, and it was chiefly used as a hunting-park for the kings and nobles of Persia. Centuries passed away without any notice being taken of this once glorious city in ruins, and its walls are believed to have been demolished by the Saracens, who subverted the empire of the Persians. Benjamin of Tudela, a Jew, who lived in the twelfth century, states, in his Itenerary, that "ancient Babylon is now laid waste; but some ruins are still to be seen of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, and men fear to enter there on account of the serpents and scorpions which are in the midst of it;" so that it was then fast sinking into that state of awful desolation foretold by the prophets of GOD.

Babylon's majestic ruins have been ascertained and visited by many modern

travellers, who have described the desolation as remarkably illustrating the predictions of Scripture. As these have declared, over the ruins of this "beauty of the Chaldees' excellency" the "Arabian pitches not his tent"—there "the shepherds make not their folds;"—but "wild beasts of the desert lie there, and their houses are full of doleful creatures." It is "a place for dragons"—"a dry land and a desert—a burnt mountain—empty—wholly desolate—pools of water—heaps—and utterly destroyed—a land where no man dwelleth—the name and remnant are cut off, and every one that passeth by is astonished."

Dr. Leonard Rauwolf, a German traveller in the East, describes what he saw in 1524, thus: "The village of Elugo now lieth on the place where formerly old Babylon, the metropolis of Chaldea, was situated. The harbor is a quarter of a league's distance from it, where people go ashore in order to proceed by land to the celebrated city of Bagdad, which is a day and a half's journey thence eastward on the Tigris. This country is so dry and barren that it cannot be tilled, and so bare that I could never have believed that this powerful city, once the most stately and renowned in all the world, and situated in the pleasant and fruitful country of Shinar, could have ever stood there, if I had not known it by its situation, and many antiquities of great beauty, which are still standing hereabout in great desolation. First by the old bridge which was laid over the Euphrates, whereof there are some pieces and arches still remaining built of burnt brick, and so strong that it is admirable. Just before the village of Elugo is the hill whereon the castle stood, and the ruins of its fortifications are still visible, though demolished and uninhabited. Behind it, and pretty near to it, did stand the tower of Babylon. It is still to be seen, and is half a league in diameter; but so ruinous, so low, and so full of venemous creatures, which lodge in holes made by them in the rubbish, that no one durst approach nearer to it than within half a league, except during two months in the winter, when these animals never stir out of their holes."

Travellers of our own times, give a similar description of that wonderful but still increasing desolation. they say, "The superstitious dread of evil spirits, and the natural terror of wild beasts abounding among the ruins of Babylon, restrain the Arab from pitching his tent, or shepherds from making their folds there. The royal palaces and noble mansions of the once magnificent city, are now nothing but unshapely heaps of bricks and rubbish: their former stately chambers are now caverns, where porcupines creep, and owls and bats nestle; where lions find dens, and jackals, hyenas, and other noxious animals, enjoy unmolested retreat, from which issue the most loathsome smells; and the entrances to which are strewed with the bones of sheep and goats. On one side of the Euphrates the canals are dry, and the bricks on an elevated surface exposed to the scorching sun are crumbled, covering an arid plain and Babylon, therefore, is a wilderness, a dry land, a desert. On the other side, the embankments of the river, and with them the vestiges of ruins over a large space, have been swept away: the vast plain is in general marshy, and in many places inaccessible, especially after the annual overflowing of the river Euphrates: no son of man doth pass thereby; the sea or river is come up on Babylon, and she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof."

"Birs Nemroud," or the temple of Belus, which was standing, though dilapidated, after the beginning of the Christian era, is still to be distinguished, worthy, from its immensity, of being a relic of ancient and glorious Babylon. Several recent English travellers have given descriptions and sketches of it, and the following from Mr. Rich will be read with deep interest:—

"Birs Nemroud is a mound of an oblong form, the total circumference of which is 762 yards. At the eastern side it is cloven by a deep furrow, and is not more

than 50 or 60 feet high; but on the western side it rises in a conical figure to the elevation of 198 feet, and on its summit is a solid pile of brick, 37 feet high by 28 in breadth, diminishing in thickness to the top, which is broken and irregular, and rent by a large fissure extending through a third of its height. It is perforated by small holes, disposed in rhomboids. The fire-burnt bricks of which it is built have inscriptions on them; and so excellent is the cement, which appears to be lime-mortar, that it is nearly impossible to extract one whole. The other parts of the summit of this hill are occupied by immense fragments of brick-work, of no determinate figure, tumbled together, and converted into solid vitrified masses, as if they had undergone the action of the fiercest fire, or had been blown up with gunpowder, the layers of bricks being perfectly discernible!"

Surveying these stupendous ruins, the prodigious remains of the greatest works that were ever accomplished or undertaken by the mightiest of mortals, we are awakened to serious reflection. Considering them as the proudest monuments of imperial wealth, and power, and national genius, thus reduced to utter desolation, and comparing them with the predictions of Holy Scripture, we perceive their design to confirm and illustrate its divinity; and we are constrained to receive it as the faithful word of GOD. Blasted thus by the Divine Providence, through successive generations of time, those shapeless vestiges of the palaces of tyrants and of the temples of idolaters, proclaim to mankind the righteous judgments of GOD upon the wicked, while they demonstrate the inspiration of his commissioned servants. Most truly instructive is the appeal of JEHOVAH to the supporters of idols and false divinities, in relation to his foreknowledge and omnipotence, especially regarding the doom of guilty Babylon! "Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no GOD else beside me; a just GOD and a SAVIOUR: there is none else. Remember the former things of old: for I am GOD, and there is none else; I am GOD, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isa. xlv. 21; xlvi. 9, 10. No less instructive is the language of the apostles of JESUS CHRIST, whose declarations afford additional confirmation to the ancient prophecies; and while they invite the joyful filial confidence of believers, they admonish the votaries of pleasure to beware of sensual gratifications, and to seek eternal salvation by an obedient faith in the LORD our Redeemer. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the FATHER, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of GOD abideth for ever." 1 John ii. 17, 18. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of GOD?" 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12.

DISSERTATION XXX.

PROPHECIES IN COURSE OF FULFILMENT.

Divine Prophecy includes the whole course of time—Advancing times and changes more fully confirm prophecy—All events subserve the kingdom of Christ—All the revolutions of time illustrate prophecy—and confirm Divine Revelation.

Divine prophecy, in its most sublime revelations, comprehends the whole course of time; commencing with the first prediction, delivered to guilty Adam in the garden of Eden, concerning the appointed Saviour of the world, until the consummation of the mystery of Providence in the kingdom of God. Events and ages, however, yet future, are embraced by the inspired predictions; and while we survey the manifest fulfilment of many of them, relating to various people, extensive countries, and mighty cities, their actual present condition affords evidence that is accumulating in strength, in support of the saving belief of Christians.

Prophecy, as considered in the foregoing dissertation, for reasons stated in the beginning of it, has scarcely been regarded in its greatest and most worthy subject—the person, offices, and ministry of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, the Divine predictions are perceived, even from that restricted review, to include a vast series of events, designed immediately or remotely to subserve one and the same grand object—the introduction and establishment of the universal empire of truth and righteousness, under the almighty, wise, and holy dominion of Jesus the Son of God. Every particular, regarding his mission, incarnation, ministry, humiliation, and triumphs, the inspired writers foretold, with a minute accuracy; and they both searched and beheld "the glory that should follow his sufferings," in the extension and blessings of his kingdom among the Gentiles.

Contemplating Divine prophecy in its original revelation—in its progressive advancement and fulfilment, in relation to numerous tribes and people—in the desolation of ancient cities—in the subversion of the mighty empires—in the subjugation of the Israelites—in the advent of Messiah—in the accomplishment of his work of redemption—in the dispersion of his enemies, the Jews—in the establishment of his kingdom—and in the preservation and propagation of his gospel to regenerate our depraved world—no subject can be imagined so elevating to the brightest understanding, or so delightful to the pious mind. Events that are now transpiring in the nations of the world, more particularly the silent, peaceful, revolution which is taking place, especially throughout Europe, manifestly declare the mysterious direction of Divine Providence: but all the mighty movements of the human mind in our days, with the rapid and surprising changes which are everywhere visible, are only the result of those eternal and gracious purposes of God, assured to us in the inspired predictions of the Holy Scriptures.

Extensively or minutely to examine the series of prophecies yet to be fulfilled, will be impossible within the limited compass of this brief dissertation: but a few notices of several of the most remarkable will not fail to be edifying; as the present condition and circumstances of the most influential nations indicate momentous changes upon the earth, and a glorious improvement throughout the world by the advancement of pure Christianity.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONVERSION OF ALL NATIONS TO CHRIST.

MESSIAH the SAVIOUR of all nations—Inspired prophets foretel the conversion of all nations—CHRIST and his apostles predict the same—Christianity already embraced by many nations—Millions of Christians, especially in the British empire and America—Influence of Bible and Missionary Societies.

MESSIAH was promised as the SAVIOUR of all nations. To Abraham, therefore, the prediction was delivered, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. xxii. 18. Jacob, by the Divine inspiration, prophesied, when dying, concerning him as the heavenly "Shiloh,"—"Unto him shall the gathering of the people be," xlix. 10. "All the ends of the world," David predicted, "shall remember and turn unto the LORD; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." Psal. xxii. 27. "Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him," lxxii. 11. Isaiah, by the prophetic Spirit, declared of him, "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious." Isa. xi. 10. "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.—So shall he sprinkle many nations.—He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." lii. 13–15, liii. 2. "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." lx. 3. JESUS himself said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John xii 32. "And JESUS came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matt. xxviii. 18–20. John closed the prophetic testimony, and said, "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Rev. xiv. 6.

These glorious predictions have already been in a great degree fulfilled. Every one knows that the system of religion founded by JESUS CHRIST, and inculcating piety, purity, and love, releasing man from every burdensome rite and every barbarous institution, abolishing idolatry and slavery, arose in Judea, when all the nations on the earth were involved in superstition, deep in corruption, worshipping idols as their highest service to their CREATOR, and when Britain was in a state of the lowest barbarism, regarded by a Latin poet of that age as "divided from the whole world," far more distant from Jerusalem than from Rome. Yet the influence of the gospel has reached even to us, converting millions of the Gentiles of our isle; and it has extended its humanizing and sanctifying blessings, not only to the islanders of the north and west, but to those even of the remote Southern Ocean, abolishing their cruel rites, with their horrible systems of base idolatry, and elevating its intelligent converts to the dignity and moral loveliness of the regenerated children of GOD.

Millions have from age to age been converted to the faith of CHRIST, "brought out of darkness," pagan and degrading, "into his marvellous light;" illustrating, by their principles and practices, "in all holy conversation and

godliness," as "the living epistles of CHRIST," the reality of their conversion of heart and life to the honor of GOD their SAVIOUR. All who profess the name of JESUS throughout Christendom may not, indeed, be regarded as altogether Christians: "the form of godliness without its power," is far too evident with many: but the most severe judgment will be constrained to acknowledge that there are multitudes of the true disciples of CHRIST in many parts of Europe, especially in the British empire, and the United States of America; and their zealous and increasing efforts in the Bible and Missionary cause, which GOD has graciously honored to the translation of the Scriptures into almost every language, and to the conversion of thousands to the faith of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, clearly indicate the certain perfect fulfilment of all the inspired predictions respecting the recovery of all nations from error and sin, to holiness and the willing service of the SON of GOD our SAVIOUR.

CHAPTER II.

THE RESTORATION OF THE JEWS IN THEIR CONVERSION TO CHRIST.

Jewish infidelity designed to be overcome—Divine predictions of the conversion of the Jews—the same assured by the Apostle Paul—Present state and excitement of the Jews—Learning of the Jews in Europe—English Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews.

JEWISH infidelity and the degraded condition of that people, scattered through all the nations, as foretold by the ancient prophets of GOD, have been noticed in a former dissertation. But sovereign mercy has decreed their restoration in their conversion to JESUS CHRIST, as their expected MESSIAH; and with their recovery to the observance of Divine ordinances, the conversion of "the fulness of the Gentiles." A few of the inspired predictions regarding that desired event are as follow:—

"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their GOD, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days." Hosea iii. 4, 5. "Thus saith the LORD GOD, Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms, any more at all; neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their GOD. And David my servant shall be king over them: and they all shall have one shepherd. they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their GOD, and they shall be my people." Ezek. xxxvii. 21–25, 27. "Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the LORD GOD." xxxix. 29. "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins" Rom. xi. 25, 27.

"GOD hath not cast away his people," Rom. xi. 2, is the declaration of an inspired apostle of CHRIST; and through every age, during the last eighteen hundred years, since their rejection and crucifixion of JESUS, they have continued "a peculiar people," and ardently expecting, according to their mistaken notions, the promised MESSIAH. Scattered, as they still are, through all the civilized nations of the world, they amount in number, it is computed, to about 5,000 000 of souls, "witnesses for the unity of GOD," as remarked by Mr. Addison, "and for the truth of Christianity." They are still waiting, and praying, for a Divine Deliverer: and there appears to exist among them, far more than at any former period, a prevailing disposition to examine the claims of the gospel of CHRIST. Education and a spirit of inquiry are worthily cherished by many of the Jews in Europe, especially in Prussia, where they have an "Academy of Sciences" in Berlin. Christians also, instead of regarding them as formerly with hatred, have begun to commiserate their low condition, and to seek their spiritual welfare and salvation. A society having this noble objec in view was established in England in 1808, by different denominations of British Christians: they have published for their use a translation of the New Testament in Hebrew; they have sent many missionaries to preach the gospel to the Israelites, some of whom are converted Jews, and many have embraced the faith of JESUS, whom their forefathers crucified: thus affording the delightful prospect of the degraded and despised nation of Israel being restored to the church of GOD, many of them probably to inherit Jerusalem and the land of Canaan, to which considerable numbers of Jews have lately been emigrating, illustrating the Divine faithfulness and the truth of the Scriptures, while they worship and serve the GOD of Abraham, through "David their Prince" our LORD and SAVIOUR.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEACE, KNOWLEDGE, AND HOLINESS, UNDER MESSIAH.

CHRIST'S kingdom upon earth, the influence of grace in the hearts of men—This foretold by the prophets—with the extension of knowledge—The cessation of war—The prevalence of holiness—Christian knowledge spreading, influences rulers and legislators—Pacific policy of the rulers in Europe—General indications in the world of the advancing kingdom of CHRIST.

CHRIST'S kingdom upon earth. consisting of his government in the hearts of men, securing to them innumerable spiritual blessings, is essentially the influence of peace, knowledge, and holiness: hence it was predicted of him as the "Prince of peace," "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. His name shall endure for ever. His name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed." Psalm lxxii. 6, 8, 17. "And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the GOD of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths, for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall sit every man under his vine and his fig-tree, and none shall make them

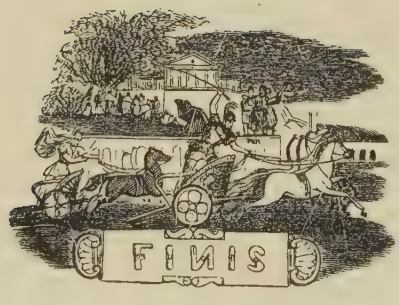
afraid, for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." Micah iv. 24, Isa. ii. 3, 4. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." xi. 9. "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.—I will make thy officers peace, and thine exacters righteousness. Violence shall be no more heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders, but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise." lx. 3, 17, 18. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be Holiness unto the LORD of hosts; and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts," Zech. xiv. 20, 21. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of GOD and of CHRIST and shall reign with him a thousand years." Rev. xx. 6.

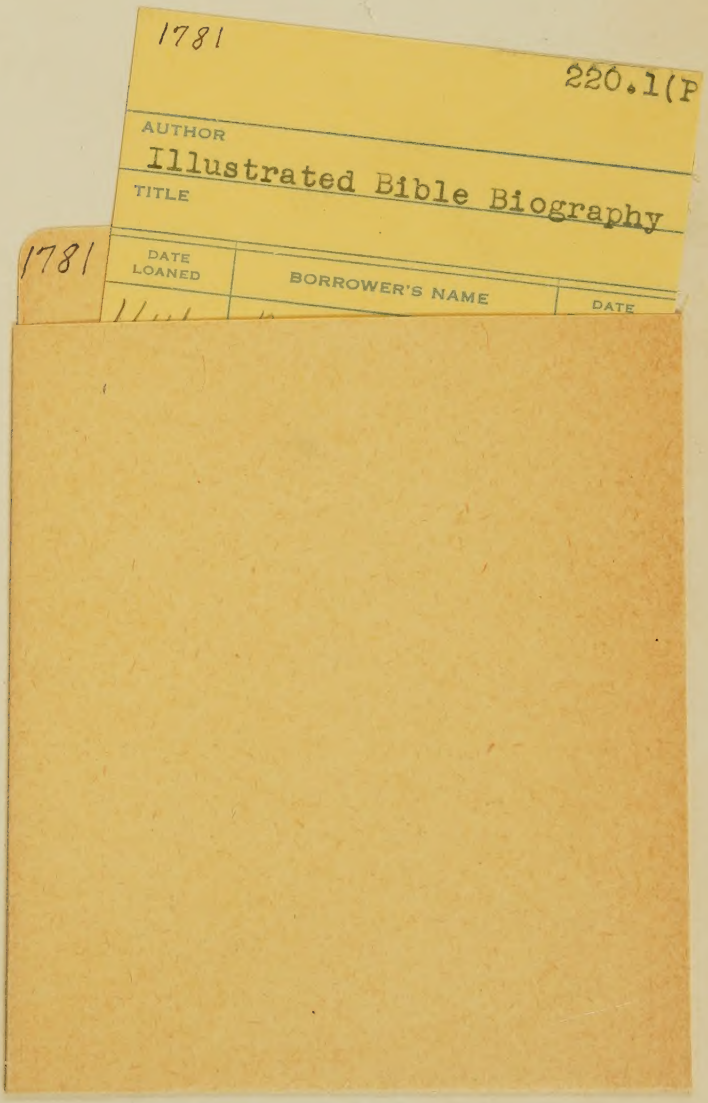
The most delightful declarations, of the inspired prophets of God, are only a few of those prophecies of the wonderful things which they have recorded for our instruction: but they lead us to anticipate glorious days upon earth; when the rulers of nations shall fully understand the nature of Christianity as taught in the Scriptures; and feeling its divine power, prosecute their high duties, in framing all their laws, and administering their several departments of government, not for selfish or party ends, but really for the public welfare, in the true and benevolent spirit of the gospel. Men shall "not learn war any more:" shocking and horrid wars have frequently been undertaken, and carried on for years, and even centuries, by kings and princes calling themselves after the blessed name of CHRIST, and even "Most Christians:" but such military rulers contradicted and dishonored their sacred peaceful profession, by their unprofitable policy and their bloody deeds.

Sacred prophecy foreshows a blissful Millennium; when the abundant grace of the Holy Spirit shall be largely poured forth upon the churches of the REDEEMER: the whole population of the earth shall profess his holy gospel and obey its institutions, and the character of the people for the space of a thousand years, shall exhibit the sanctity and zeal of the noble army of martyrs for JESUS CHRIST. The essential peculiarities of the millennial period are represented in prophecy as most remarkable. Divine knowledge, when "all shall be taught of the LORD," and exemplary holiness will universally prevail; men of every rank and station will be intelligent believers in the gospel; civil rulers will be influenced by the fear of GOD, and directed by his divine oracles; crimes will cease, and liberty, security, and happiness, be enjoyed by all mankind The visible church, formerly divided and sectarian, will be united as one harmonious body—believing the same doctrines, observing the same ordinances, the ministers "seeing eye to eye," richly replenished with all divine gifts and graces and experiencing the consolations of the HOLY GHOST. Holiness and righteousness thus producing temperance and prolonging health, will secure unexampled happiness: and GOD will give additional splendor to the heavens, with increased fertility to the earth. Peace reigning in every region throughout the world; individuals, families, and nations, by believing in JESUS and obeying his gospel, will be exempted from the calamities produced by unsanctified passions, and the whole race of man be blessed under the spiritual reign of MESSIAH!

Happily, in promoting that long-desired period, the heavenly principles of our holy religion are exhibiting their mighty influence among rulers through the increasing knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, which are now being circulated by hundreds of thousands of copies in the several countries of Europe, and by

thousands in every language, even among Mohammedan and Pagan nations of Africa, Asia, and Polynesia. Philanthropy, taught by the divine doctrine and perfect example of JESUS CHRIST, is seen powerfully influencing the legislators in every country, far beyond what was ever known in former times; knowledge, by means of general education, advances among the people in a degree unparalleled in past ages, and every appearance indicates, especially the long-continued general peace, and the increasing pacific disposition of the formerly hostile courts of Europe, the rapid progress of the long-desired universal kingdom of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST!

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